

SUNDAY
MORNINGS

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TO J. L. GARVIN

DEAR GARVIN,

These papers, unaltered save for the most trifling corrections, are a second selection from those which I have contributed weekly to the *Observer* for ten years past. I can wish myself no better fortune than the continued privilege of addressing so tolerant an audience under the auspices of so generous an editor.

Yours,

J. C. S.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>BIBLE AND PRAYER BOOK—</i>	
THE NEW PRAYER BOOK	I
THE BIBLE	9
<i>POETS AND PROSE-WRITERS—</i>	
THE WAR IN MEMORY	17
DEBITS AND CREDITS	24
THE MODERN NOVEL	31
THE MODERN ESSAYIST	38
MR. CHESTERTON'S VERSE	45
MR. WELLS	55
MR. LAWRENCE'S POEMS	64
YOUTH	71
SIR WILLIAM WATSON	79
HERBERT TRENCH	86
<i>PIRATES AND SMUGGLERS—</i>	
THE BOOK OF BURIED TREASURE	96
A DICTIONARY OF PIRATES	104
THE SMUGGLERS	112
<i>THE ENGLISH INN—</i>	
THE INN	121
MEDIEVAL TAVERNS	128
THE ENGLISH INN	134
<i>SPORTS—</i>	
BROAD HALFPENNY DOWN	143
CRICKET LITERATURE	150
THE LITERATURE OF SPORT	159
BRIGHTER CRICKET	165

CONTENTS—*continued*

	PAGE
<i>SHOWS AND SHOWMEN—</i>	
THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS	174
CLOWNS	183
THE SHOWMAN	190
BARNUM	197
 <i>DRAMATISTS—</i>	
WEBSTER	204
BEN JONSON	213
TENDER OTWAY	223
CONGREVE	231
 <i>CHAPTERS ENDED—</i>	
MAURICE HEWLETT	241
MAURICE HEWLETT'S ESSAYS	246
A. CLUTTON BROCK	253
JOSEPH CONRAD	260
CONRAD'S LAST BOOK	270
O.B.	280
THOMAS HARDY	289
EDMUND GOSSE	301
ARTHUR BENSON'S DIARY	314
JOHN MORLEY AS A WRITER	320
THE NINETIES AND JOHN LANE	330

SUNDAY
MORNINGS

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THE NEW PRAYER-BOOK

THE changes proposed in the Prayer-book are of several kinds. There are, first, changes whose importance lies in their doctrinal or ritual significance. There are, secondly, mere liturgical additions. There are, thirdly, alterations proposed because existing words are believed to be out of tune with the feeling of our time. And, fourthly, there are verbal modifications which are intended to secure greater lucidity and exactitude of statement. The first two kinds are beyond my province in this place ; but I hope I may say a few words about the others without becoming too violently controversial—especially as they have been rather neglected in the Press owing to the interest taken in larger issues. And it should be apparent that the expression of doubts about certain verbal changes will not be taken to mean an absence of deep admiration for the labours of the Bishops, for the reverential care with which (as a rule) they have treated the traditional text, and for their endeavours to produce a consonant English in their additions.

Where the new text differs from the old, two things are at once noticeable. One is that the modern ear is less certain than the old, and the

SUNDAY MORNINGS

other that the modern mind is more literal than the old. Let us take the second first. The tendency appears in the revised Athanasian Creed, where the word "confused" is substituted for the word "confounded." It is true that "confounded" has changed meaning, and is no longer, in conversation, equivalent to confused. But is there really any suggestion that anybody who attempted to understand the Athanasian Creed at all was ever subject to the slightest misconception? A desire to be exact has led to the sacrifice of the more euphonious term without any real corresponding or counterbalancing gain. Literalism comes in also in the revised Marriage Service. "Obey" is a thorny subject: I will not touch it. There are also among serious and sensitive persons, two schools of thought in relation to the passages which deal with the objects of matrimony. For myself, without pressing the point, though I quite understand the point of view of the innovators, I am glad that I was married with the old blunt form. It seems odd to me that these changes should have been made in this generation of all generations; that a church should be the one place where a spade cannot be called a spade, and that the one occasion on which "frankness" between man and woman is not to be allowed is when they are within five minutes of being married to each other. That, as I say, I do not emphasise; reasonable people differ. But the substitution of "with my body I thee honour," for "with my body I thee worship," and of "share" for "endow" in the bridegroom's

THE NEW PRAYER-BOOK

pledge about "worldly goods," is another matter. The discussions which led to the proposed change are quite easy to imagine; it is evident that the innovators coolly considered words which showed a fine excess, and resolved to substitute prose for poetry. Yet what is gained by the abandonment of those unqualified surrenders? It may well be that the bridegroom does not legally and literally hand over every cent he possesses to the bride, though that really is how people feel, or ought to feel, when they are being married. But is "share," quite apart from the loss in regard to music (an ally of the spirit), much nearer complete accuracy? You can share in any degree; you can take the apple and leave the other person the core; a precise statement (applicable to any case much less all cases) of the extent to which a bridegroom intends to settle his worldly goods upon his bride is not possible. Why not go the whole hog as in the old version, and let the term remain symbolical of a state of affection and intention rather than attempt to approach the terminology of a contract?

What lies behind the truncated Ten Commandments in the Alternative Order for Holy Communion is a matter of doubt. It may be literalism or it may be merely a desire to save time. The second commandment is cut short at "worship them." The feeling about "a jealous God" and "the sins of the fathers" is easy to understand; but if an alternative is deemed desirable here, why does the whole original text of Exodus XX. remain undisturbed in the Catechism, for

SUNDAY MORNINGS

which no alternative form is provided? The truncation of the tenth commandment to the blunt and ineuphonious "Thou shalt not covet," was presumably derived from the feeling that covetable oxen and asses were more normal in ancient Jewry than in modern England. Yet can it be supposed that even the simplest villager has ever been unaware of the general significance of the commandment, and is it so certain that the force of the impression made is not heightened by the roll of the old sentences? In any event, two different sets of Ten Commandments (though the practice of shortening them has already been indulged in) cannot seem a good idea to anyone who is aware of the value and effect of repetition, which is ritual.

The nature, qualities, and defects of the modern tendency come out perhaps most clearly in the revised version of the Athanasian Creed. This has been freely altered: the reasons for the alterations are sometimes evident, but opinions as to their desirability must differ. The "three incomprehensibles" have gone in favour of "three infinites"; sonority has been lost, and it is open to question whether anything has been gained, though it is evident that the revisers think they have attained a greater accuracy of phrasing. But why has "the third day" been omitted from the sentence "rose again the third day from the dead"? Possibly some closely scrutinising mind suggested that it was superfluous—that the resurrection, not the period, was the prime matter of faith: yet with the possibly superfluous words

SUNDAY MORNINGS

any more ; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed and shall lead them into living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

An improvement in the old Service for the Burial of the Dead one had not thought possible. Yet modifications are made, and, amongst others alternative lessons are authorised to be used instead of I. Corinthians xv. 20. " Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." There is no sublimer passage in all the Bible, no greater achievement of speech in all the Authorised Version, than that summary of life and the after life. " If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not ? Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." The argument, the profuse imagery, sun, moon, and stars, and then the triumphant conclusion :—

For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility and this mortal shall have put on immortality ; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?

Why any man should wish any other words to be spoken over his own or his beloved's grave passes my comprehension.

THE NEW PRAYER-BOOK

The proposed new Calendar—still subject to further revision—contains more names than the old. St. Patrick, who does not appear in the existing calendar, is added, with Columba, Aidan, and Hilda, Francis of Assisi, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Catherine of Siena. Catherine of the Wheel, patroness of the College at Cambridge, is removed from the Calendar, with another saint and martyr whose day was once very popular. This is Crispin (October 25) the patron saint of shoemakers :

This day is called the Feast of Crispian :

He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say, " To-morrow is Saint Crispian " :
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say, " These wounds I had on Crispin's
day."

Old men forget ; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantage
What feats he did that day ; then shall our
names,

Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the King, Bedford, and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
This story shall the good man teach his son ;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered ;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

It seems a pity that the Saint of Agincourt should vanish from the English Calendar. Doubtless there are reasons, though I know not what. But who would propose to remove St. George, though he of the dragon is a beautiful myth, and the identity and career of the historical George are so doubtful that the malignant have been able to argue that our national saint was really a crooked Army Contractor.

February 13, 1927.

THE BIBLE

THIS, *The Cambridge Shorter Bible*, arranged by A. Nairne, T. R. Glover, Sir A. Quiller-Couch, is a reduced Bible, printed without the indications of chapter and verse. The ordinary Bible is so bespattered with italics, headlines, paragraph marks, and daggers that it is almost impossible for the reader to surrender to the sense. Cross-references and indications of textual emendations are necessary in some editions ; but the ordinary Bible is no more suited to the ordinary reader than a variorum edition of Shakespeare with numbered lines and footnotes would be suited to the ordinary schoolboy. The editors of this edition have gone farther. They think that the Bible may be compressed. Compressing it, they have (they say) omitted almost all of the legislative books, and redundant passages of the historical books, as well as obscure and unimportant passages elsewhere. At the same time they have tried to retain "every passage that has a special appeal to the scholarly or devout student of the New Testament, or of English letters"—and "such passages and verses of the Old Testament as the writers of the New Testament quoted, or had in mind as they wrote" ; and have endeavoured "to keep every passage which for any school of Christian thought has particular associations." Nobody could have done this work to the satis-

faction of all interested persons ; but I do think that we might reasonably have expected a more generally acceptable work than that which we are given.

We might, *imprimis*, have had a more candid preface. Many of the cuts have been made, apparently, on moral grounds or grounds of taste. This (of which the editors need not have been ashamed) might have been frankly admitted. The Old Testament is full of dreadful stories : the disgusting legends or histories of primitive tribes. Few people, who wish to read a diminished Bible, will complain of the omission from this edition of the story of Lot and his daughters, of that of Dinah and Shechem, of the drunkenness of Noah, of the story of Abraham, Sarah and Pharoah, of the Levite and the ostracism of the Benjamites. If the book must be cut, these are the sort of stories that can most easily be spared, and the editors have apparently had no difficulty in deciding which were the most repulsive. But the moment we get beyond the province of bowdlerisation we are on much more debatable ground. And, unfortunately, we are on ground where the efforts of the Cambridge editors are not merely open to challenge but liable to severe condemnation. Let them leave out whatever stories they may ; let them politely ignore the institution of the rite of circumcision, and tidy up the early history of the Jews in various ways. Now and then we may object to a narrative " cut " : as, for instance, to that which fraudulently obliterates the difficulty about Enoch's being one man's son

THE BIBLE

in the fourth chapter of Genesis and another's in the fifth. There are three editors of this new Bible, and I do not know which of them is responsible for which part of the book. There was a nineteenth-century author who was published by the firm of Chatto and Windus, was very angry with them, called upon them for the first time in his life and was shown in to a benevolent-looking old gentleman with a bald head. "I don't know who you are," he said, "but if you are Chatto, damn Windus, and if you are Windus, damn Chatto." I dare not blame one of the editors lest the fault be with another. Let it go at that about this sort of tinkering with the biblical text: and none will bother about the shortenings which are achieved by the elimination of tedious genealogies and (this is the biggest example) the omission of the "Chronicles" which are so largely duplicated by the Books of the Kings. David, on occasion, tortured with axes and harrows; Moses, on occasion, ordered the massacre of women and children: of the stories of these events we may agree that "they never will be missed"—granted the principle of reducing the Bible has once been admitted. But what I do complain about is that the editors have not done their work well upon the lines which they do specifically indicate as their lines of selection.

It is suggested that passages have been retained which gave rise to passages in the New Testament. Here there is no question of taste: merely a question of fact. I notice the absence of that

passage in "Lamentations," which refers to the cheek and the smiter. "Lamentations" is one of the books which are wholly omitted: the others include the "Chronicles," "Joel," "Obadiah," "Nahum," "Zephaniah," both Epistles to the Thessalonians, the first "Timothy," "Titus," the very small second and third Epistles of John and the Epistle of Jude. A passage far more important which is omitted is the verse from the 69th Psalm.

They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

That psalm is missing. So is the 44th Psalm, so also the 53rd, so also the 55th, which contains the verse:—

And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then I would fly away, and be at rest.

and the sentence, also "cast thy burden upon the Lord." The 58th Psalm, again, is omitted, with its reference to the "deaf adder that stoppeth her ears," and "the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely." But now we have got away from the question of passages which are referred to in the New Testament, and are watching for familiar sentences and beautiful sentences, which should have been kept in this new Bible, and are not.

There is nothing unfair in this searching for omissions. The onus here is on the selectors: they did not write the Bible and their claims to

applause can only be based upon the measure of skill with which they have eliminated superfluities from the Bible, and preserved beauties, moral and other. Granted the material, and granted the scale of the reduction, I do not think the work well done. In certain regards no exception can be taken. Some of the Old Testament stories have been kept in their entirety, such as the story of the Creation and the story of Joseph ; except for genealogies, nothing has been removed from the Gospels or the Acts. But as soon as we approach the question of " cuts " we are engaged in controversy : we find that very many phrases have disappeared, which are either treasured by all Christians or by one section or another of Christians. " Ecclesiastes " is overcut : " the crackling of thorns under a pot " is not to be found here ; nor the magnificent fourth chapter ; nor that ninth chapter in which occur the verses :

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.

I returned, and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong.

The " Song of Solomon " is truncated altogether too much, quite apart from the matter of bowdlerisation : " the foxes, the little foxes " go, and much else with them. The fine eighth chapter of Amos is omitted ; and the total rejection of Joel means the absence of such

phrases as "the years that the locust hath eaten" and (this second is altogether a fine chapter) "rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." That same chapter of Joel, so strangely excluded, contains also the sentence :—

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams, your young
men shall see visions,

and

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and
the moon into blood, before the great and the
terrible day of the Lord come.

The third chapter of Joel, an eloquent rhapsody, contains the great phrase "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." Even this is not here. Why these claims for this Shorter Bible?

There is very little of the Apocrypha. The Book of Job is so curiously handled that the "happy ending" is left out: an utterly astonishing perversion of the editorial function. For that book, it should be observed, the Revised Version has been used: the result being that the lovely "Canst thou bind the sweet influence of the Pleiades" is turned into "Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades"; that we are presented with "As oft as the trumpet soundeth, he saith, Aha" instead of "He saith among the trumpets Ha! Ha"; and "Hast thou clothed his neck with the quivering mane?" for "Hast thou

clothed his neck with thunder? ”—as though anybody ever supposed that thunderbolts were hung about a horse’s neck. It is a tribute to the narrative strength and concision of the Book of Daniel that it has escaped the surgical knife of these editors altogether.

The omissions from the “ New Testament ” are equally striking in view of the selectors’ avowed aim. Read again that noble fifth chapter of First Thessalonians, but you will not be able to read it in the Cambridge Shorter Bible. The searcher in this volume will not find Paul’s “ greet all the brethren with an holy kiss,” nor will he find the advice to Timothy :—

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine
for thy stomach’s sake and thine often
infirmities.

—which a stout champion of wine like “ Q ” might well have been expected to retain. That occurs a chapter before that other celebrated sentence (also missing), “ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” The fine Epistle of James is, in my opinion, murdered ; the total omission of Jude is utterly incomprehensible. It cannot have been “ Q ” ; it must surely have been Windus, who eliminated that marvellous thing, a little obscure, perhaps, but, in point of sound, one of the three or four most sonorous and beautifully cadenced lessons ever read in church :—

These are spots in your feasts of charity,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

It may be observed that parts of this chapter are closely analogous to parts of the second Epistle of Peter; but that is not here either. Were about a hundred well-chosen pages added to this book, all the objections I have made could be removed. As the work stands, it is irritatingly defective, which is all the more annoying because its physical appearance is so attractive.

December 16, 1928.

THE WAR IN MEMORY

THERE was an interim during which very little was written about the war except the books by politicians and responsible soldiers, who were anxious either to establish their claims to efficiency and influence or to clear their reputations against charges of stupidity or defective morality. During that interim it must have been noticed, by anybody capable of noticing anything, that very few survivors of the war were willing to talk about it or read about it. Somebody defined modern war as "years of intense boredom, punctuated by moments of intense fear"; and, for some time after the war, the ordinary soldier was doubly bored if he was asked to recollect his boredom. Time has passed. Nerves have settled down. A new perspective has been achieved. Distance has made the retrospect tolerable. Long periods of boredom can be telescoped and days of enjoyment recovered and treasured. Incidents, the memory of which used to cause bitter anger, can now be talked of calmly, if ironically; horrors from the recreation of which the mind shrank, can now be stated objectively. The soldiers are at last able to talk about those things which most gravely bore upon their sanity, and are at last able to be sentimental about their past as soldiers as we are all sentimental about our pasts. They can never become so anecdotal or so sentimental as

the survivors of other wars: the proportion of horror, agony, strain, and activity to relaxation has been far too severely increased: even the most phlegmatic cannot forget the dominance of misery, the sense of purposelessness, and the images of certain individual scenes which obstinately refuse to lose their clearness.

Yet after such a war and such experiences the mind can recover and adapt itself; and the number of war-books that are primarily records of individual experience, not arguments about politics and strategy, is increasing. Interest in the "event" is being renewed and ability to face the starkness of it is being acquired. So far as I can remember—though I may be forgetting something signal—every outstanding prose work this year has been written with some reference to the war. Colonel Lawrence's book I need scarcely mention: I am thinking of more recent books which are less famous—books which I have reviewed here within the last few weeks. Mr. Sassoon's *Memoirs of a Foxhunting Man* was orientated by the war and could not have been written but for the war: the author, with the awful wilderness of war as a foil and a sequel, portrayed the rural life that he lost and that all of us lost: and, when he came to the war itself, he found himself able to describe its incidents with a pitiful detachment of which he would have been incapable ten years ago. Mr. Henry Williamson's novel, *The Pathway*, is the story of a man who would have been very different had he not been through the war, and is sprinkled with ghastly

THE WAR IN MEMORY

brief memories of the war. Now, after these years of shrinking and of pondering, Mr. Blunden, one of the poets who survived, has written in his *Undertones of War*, not a novel, not a political treatise, not a direct attack upon war, not a lopsided pamphlet about war's cruelties, but a quiet and candid account of all that happened to himself, the obscurest and (though he naturally does not say or know this) most modest of subalterns.

Mr. Blunden is a type of the men who have most right to speak about the war and who saw most of the war. He was a schoolboy when the war broke out ; he was in the infantry ; he spent two and a half years in the trenches ; and he is a poet—which, according to Keats, means that you feel as the majority of men feel and can express what they cannot. He takes us—without even an argumentative digression—from a training camp in England in 1915, back to England in 1917 : and we see the whole process through the eyes of a quiet, observant boy, well disciplined, but full of ideas ; an artist, but one who relished the society of every kind of hearty man. The truth has been set down with no thought for anything but the truth : the result, with such hands at work, is a book which is at once a prose-poem and an invaluable historical record.

It is also very good propaganda. I do not think that the origins of the war are once mentioned by Mr. Blunden, or that he ever even records a conversation about the character of the

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Germans. The Germans do not come in very frequently. With very few exceptions, when they *do* come in, they are either corpses or prisoners, forlorn dead bodies or bewildered prisoners who explain that they used to be milkmen or elementary school-teachers. War, with the modern infantryman, is not a thing to be waged, but a thing to be suffered: and this, though there is never a line of grumbling or argument, is the principal theme of Mr. Blunden's book. We have pictures of tedious training, of uncomfortable watching, of hopeless attack against an unseen enemy, under terrific shell-fire. The implied argument is sometimes strong: though more of it is directed against our own high military authorities than against the enemy. Direct argument there is none: this is the story of a boy who survived what Mr. Wells so accurately and finally called "a massacre of boys."

He lived: others, English, French, German, Russian, who might similarly have lived to experience the world and delight others with their experiences, to thank the Almighty for his works in Nature, were hit by bullets, or disembowelled by bayonets, or blown to pieces by shells. They knew as little about it as he, most of them: as they saw it, whatever side they were on, they were sent into that inferno by elder men whose business it was to decide what was dutiful, what was moral, and what was unavoidable—the wiser of them realising that those elder men were once young and in peril, and that they themselves, should they survive, would be ruling the young in their

day. Mr. Blunden was not, on the one hand, the stupid, unthinking youth, without the capacity for questioning the course of events or doubting the iniquity of every soul against whom he might be sent to fight ; nor was he the impatient youth in a hurry to test everything prematurely by lofty, and sometimes dubious, ideals. He was sensitive and sensible, a young English countryman : distinguished merely by his intellectual faculties from a million such of all ranks. Here is the journal of what a million such saw, thought and felt : with a few things added (some in verse) which are peculiar to poets.

It is a very beautiful book. The march of its music is such that we hardly notice passages which would stand out against most backgrounds : its truth is such that it never occurs to us to question a single statement or to wish for supplementary facts : the thing is there, and so is Mr. Blunden, watching it, the competent small subaltern, with his little books of verse in his pocket : evidently good at his work : always prone to cogitate and think of private jokes at odd moments, whether when lying in a shell-hole under the wintry stars or drinking port with superior persons in more comfortable quarters. He saw men whom he loved, and men whom he hated, being tormented, mutilated and killed ; he saw a country of grass and trees, flowers and birds, being churned into a mud-heap ; he quailed under deafening barrages and was awe-struck by displays of murderous flares at night : now he writes an elegy on all that, fortified by memories of un-

quenchable human spirits which could jest in the ghastly presences of death, cold hatred, and devastation. With an accumulation of little details he exhibits the whole infantry war to us. He asks himself a question and answers it :—

Do I loiter too long among little things ? It may be so, but those whom I foresee as my readers will pardon my propensity. Each circumstance of the British experience that is still with me has ceased for me to be big or little, and now appeals to me more even than the highest exaltation of pain or scene in the “ Dynasts,” and than the heaven of adoration incarnadined with Desdemona’s handkerchief. Was it nearer the soul of war to draw lines in coloured inks on vast maps at Montreuil or Whitehall, to hear of or to project colossal shocks in a sort of mathematical symbol, than to rub knees with some poor jaw-dropped resting sentry, under the dripping rubber sheet, balanced on the greasy firestep, a fragment of some rural newspaper or Mr. Bottomley’s oracle beside him ?

That sentry is a type : a recurring figure in this book : the poor fellow, of whom some hundreds of thousands were killed : summoned from the pit-head or the plough’s tail, enduring Hell without prospect of gain or thanks :—

It is time to hint to a new age what your value, what your love was ; your Ypres is gone, and you are gone ; we were lucky to see you “ in the pink ” against white-ribbed and socket-eyed despair.

THE WAR IN MEMORY

There was a colonel—by no means a man of letters, it seems—but, after all, the non-literary respect men of letters much more than they respect each other. That colonel, hearing that Mr. Blunden's first book of poems had been well reviewed in *The Times Literary Supplement*, took him out of the trenches and employed him at battalion headquarters. Conceivably, one result is this book : as fine a specimen of courage, truth-loving and good prose as our generation has seen.

December 2, 1928.

DEBITS AND CREDITS

FROM time to time, in the cause of charity, somebody arranges a Veteran's Variety performance. The sprightly comediennes and gay young "swells" of our youth emerge, domesticated and portly or lean and grizzled, from respectable nooks in Hackney or Balham, and give once more performances which are mingled with our earliest memories, and have long had a legendary character. Old men appear as young dogs with silk hats, monocles and spats and sing songs about captivating the ladies or painting the West End red; elderly ladies don the golden locks and pinafores of the 1895 ingenue; after thirty years we see some wizard in tights balancing billiard balls on his nose as our fathers delighted to see him do in an age whose fashions died with the old Queen. It is with a mixture of feelings that one attends such a recital. We are anxious that our former heroes should do themselves justice and prove to a younger generation our favourite contention that things are not what they used to be; that the moderns may be very clever in their way, but cannot conceivably exercise the spell of their predecessors. We have the strange, intellectual experience of confusion of times; as though suddenly in a marching battalion of khaki-clad soldiers there should appear a file of Lady Butler's bearded and vivid Crimeans. And old recol-

DEBITS AND CREDITS

lections come oddly and painfully to life ; such and such a song we sang with boys we have not seen for thirty years in places we never think about ; and another an old servant would hum as she went about her work ; another revives pictures of old elections or jubilees or half-forgotten wars. And there stand these figures from the past, less aware, infinitely less aware, of the change and the passage of things, than ourselves.

I finished Mr. Kipling's *Debits and Credits* with something of those sensations. He is not in years so very old ; but that great early prime when he did so many things that none had done before, and that he now very occasionally repeats, as it were, for the benefit of friends, seems very long ago. He is, if I do not press his analogy too far, of the Arthur Roberts era, rather than that of Mr. Nelson Keys. And he too—though he happily belongs to that section of the retired who retain their powers though they seldom exercise them in public—has remained singularly unaltered. If there is no weakening there has been little development. Years may have slightly softened the accent and mellowed the attitude, but that is all ; the songs are of the old brand—brands rather, for the repertory was extensive.

There is nothing in this volume which—bating the accident of topical themes—might not have been in one or other of Mr. Kipling's earlier volumes. The familiar impress of the familiar personality is upon it all ; the methods and tones, are those of the old Kipling, there is no tincture of an altered social atmosphere. Perhaps none was

SUNDAY MORNINGS

ever to be expected: his genius, stoutly barricaded within its castle, was never very receptive to winds of doctrine. His curiosity about technique seems to have exhausted itself in that first blazing fever when he invented so many novelties, as it were by instinct, and his curiosity about the world was satisfied with the first strong, and still living, impressions that he formed of it. We may be grateful, since he is what he is, that what we now receive from him are not mere mechanical repetitions of himself, that his later occasional pieces are good in themselves and do not simply remind us of pleasure we found elsewhere.

There are, for a start, numbers of poems in the book. Some of them are weak. I am frankly puzzled, for example, with the two dramatic fragments, of which, perhaps, Mr. Kipling was thinking when he modestly included "Debits" in his characteristically antithetical title. There is a poem about naval volunteers which begins:—

Or even the battered liners sank
With their passengers to the dark,
I was head of a Walworth bank
And you were a grocer's clerk.

This not very brilliant piece of journalism is interesting as illustrating the persistence of that Swinburnian influence which was always so strong with Mr. Kipling, though partially obscured by the un-Swinburnian concreteness and colloquialism of his language. There are rhetorical poems about gods, altars, and hills; there is a

DEBITS AND CREDITS

poem about Hiram, King of Tyre; there are dignified Horatian quatrains; there is a Ballad of Rahere. The two best poems in the book (with exceptions to be noted) are "We and They," a delicious children's poem, and some stanzas about Sussex cattle. He surveys them with pride, admires their beauty, appraises their points, dreams of an unmatched breed, and then ends:—

There's a valley, under oakwood, where a man
may dream his dream,
In the milky breath of cattle laid at ease,
Till the moon o'ertops the alders, and her image
chills the stream,
And the river-mist runs silver round their
knees!

Now the footpaths fade and vanish; now the
ferny clumps deceive;
Now the hedgerow-folk possess their fields
anew;
Now the Herd is lost in darkness, and I bless
them as I leave,
My Sussex cattle fading in the dew.

The prose pieces also conform to type, or to types. There are even two new Stalky stories, which will be enjoyed by those who think (as I do not) that Mr. Kipling's school stories were among the more fortunate of his inventions. There is a fable, freely sprinkled with Oriental tropes, about the Garden of Eden, explaining how Man and Woman became loving enemies, perpetually at loggerheads, and necessary to each other; and

DEBITS AND CREDITS

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SUNDAY MORNINGS

there is an amusing sketch at Heaven's Gate, with a Byronic St. Peter in the centre of the picture. There is a great deal of dialect and a good deal of slang; also a certain amount of that average man's banter which has always had so strange a fascination for Mr. Kipling. This is very prominent in "The Sea Constables," a war story, when temporary sailors on leave talk and chaff in a London restaurant with a heartiness that never quite rings like the real thing, and wouldn't necessarily be very interesting if it did. They end the meal—which is, of course, about a slippery neutral customer—by drinking "Damnation to all neutrals." This is in the same positive and controversial strain as "The Vineyard," the poem about America and the war, which has already produced such a stir in the American Press. It would be absurd to expect Mr. Kipling to publish a volume of verses which did not contain at least one poem which gave some section of mankind the feeling that it was being treated with injustice: discrimination of judgment and fine shades in these matters have always been as foreign to Mr. Kipling as a timid reluctance to say what he thinks. But, really, people ought to know better than to be seriously annoyed by him at this time of day; let them discount what he says, remember how many other toes he has trampled upon in the past and be grateful for the uncontroversial and humane masterpieces this lavish artist has bestowed upon all mankind. A moment's anger or a moment's impishness—and there is always a strain of that in these attacks—need not

DEBITS AND CREDITS

be made grounds for hot recriminations or a vendetta.

Let those who are incensed by "The Vineyard" have recourse to the two best stories in the book. "The Gardener," a short and tender story of a war death and a grave, slight as its outlines are, is as perfectly told as any story that Mr. Kipling ever told; and, even were its execution less amusing and rich than it is, the mere conception of "The Janeites" would put it in the canon of his successes. He brings together at the front a group of Jane Austen's lovers, bound closely by that tie, a tie always strong; he shows them puzzling the illiterate by their intimate talk of a mysterious Jane, and imposing her works upon the least Austenian of men. In his love for Jane Austen will be found the key to much that charms us in his quieter work, and much that puzzles us in his noisier work which, for all its brilliance, always has a vague air of being spoken in a forced voice, and (as it were) on theory. A little snatch, "Jane lies in Winchester," opens the story; and a lively and lovely nuptial song for Jane and Captain Wentworth in Heaven ends it:—

Jane went to Paradise;
That was only fair.
Good Sir Walter met her first,
And led her up the stair.
Henry and Tobias,
And Miguel of Spain,
Stood with Shakespeare at the top
To welcome Jane.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

If he can, and will, write like this what does it matter that he does the average American an injustice in suggesting that he thought he could tell us how we should have fought the war, which he joined in at the close? The credits are not balanced by the debits.

September 19, 1926.

THE MODERN NOVEL

The Modern Novel by Elizabeth Drew is a better specimen than most of a kind of book which is growing common: the volume of criticisms on current tendencies and contemporary authors. The author opens with chapters on "The Plain Reader," "The Novel and the Age," "Sex Simplexes, and Complexes," and "The New Psychology," proceeds to consider separately novels by women, rustic novels and American novels, and then gives us chapters on Messrs. Galsworthy, H. G. Wells, Bennett, and Conrad. She writes with great liveliness, and with a profusion of intimate reference that makes one wonder how a single person could possibly have read so many novels.

As a diagnostician of the intellectual colour of the age and its novel, Miss Drew is clever and accurate. She perhaps tends to forget that the mass of English mankind cannot be assumed to have shifted its spiritual and moral positions as far as her intellectual novelists have done: but, after all, the novelists are her theme. She sees the age as completely sceptical and groping. The elder generation, she says, is distressed by the reflection of this in the modern novel, and still more by "a relentless frankness towards actualities." The novels reflect "a cosmic disorder," and particularly on the subject of sex, "a

SUNDAY MORNINGS

new consciousness" of which impregnates the mind of contemporary society. At moments she appears to hail our chaos of conviction and practice as a release from ancestral fetters. At others she appears to glimpse the fact that, although doubtless inevitable, it is a misfortune. She compares one contemporary to Rousseau, the muddled, the dissatisfied, the subversive egoist ; but we are surrounded by little Rousseaus. And she suddenly surprises us by hoping, after the most serious laudatory examination of all sorts of lopsided people, that our literature may get back to "that sane, full-blooded, generous, humorous outlook we have had in the past in Chaucer and Fielding." I should like to hear Fielding on those men of genius, Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Joyce ; their inferiors with similar proclivities he could hardly have borne to read, unless compelled to, in the course of his duties as a Bow-street magistrate. We are at present in an unfortunate condition. Most of the novelists with minds do not wish to delight and exalt us, and refuse to concern themselves with careful art ; and most of those who attempt to give us enjoyment have no minds and are incapable of good writing. There is a plague of story-tellers without stories, satirists without wit, moralists without morals, scientists without science, reformers without history, stylists without grammar, and evangelists without love ; and they all call themselves artists.

Miss Drew's is an extremely intelligent book. It is also amusing. Miss Drew writes clearly and vivaciously, and scatters phrases all the way, as

THE MODERN NOVEL

when she refers to those who "give the subconscious a fountain pen and see what will happen," or when she attacks the smug who regard literature as "the missing link between God and suburbia." Its principal drawbacks are two. The first is a tendency to tumble people out in helter-skelter confusion without sufficient discrimination between the good and the mediocre; and the second, which is at bottom, attributable to the same causes, is an inadequate attention to the fact that writing English and constructing novels are arts. To say that she is blind to style, and "technique" would be unfair. To do her justice, she has a special "Note," if a skimpy one, on "Technique," and frequently admits that various novelists write well, create living characters, or fail to create living characters. But on the whole it is opinion and attitude that engage her attention; and in this she resembles many of the novelists with whom she deals, and most of the critics of her own time.

Poor old literature! It must be either a branch of science or a branch of ethical, or unethical, propaganda. Certain early remarks of Miss Drew's indicate which way the wind is blowing. Detective stories and the works of Mr. P. G. Wodehouse are singled out as things which nobody could take seriously when discussing Art; as though Poe had not condescended to the detective story and as though *Piccadilly Jim* were not, in point of construction, "life" and expression, a very much better work than many of the solemn compositions to which Miss Drew so

SUNDAY MORNINGS

reverently defers. Everybody fails to define Art, but the peculiar tinge of her own failure is indicative :

Art is communication of experience ; the novel is direct communication of human experience, and the fascination of its study lies first of all in an unquenchable and detached curiosity to meet and appraise as many as possible of the multitudinous existing varieties of character, situation, action and opinion. It follows, then, that from the emotional and intellectual point of view, the matter of supreme importance in criticising a novel is the answer to the question : From what kind of mind does this writing come ? Out of how deep and wide an experience was it born ? This and not the mere question of the subject matter, is the all-important starting-point for discussion.

There is certainly part of the truth in that, and she drives in one of her points very humorously with a newspaper report of the tragedy of *Othello*, beginning :

MIXED MARRIAGE, MURDER AND SUICIDE.

Finds Truth too Late, says Coloured Husband.

An inquest was held on Wednesday last to investigate the circumstances attending the deaths of a Moor and his wife (a white woman), which took place on Monday night last under tragic circumstances. It appeared from the evidence of the deceased man's secretary, Michael Cassio, that the two, who had only

THE MODERN NOVEL

recently been married, had lived together very happily, until his employer had come under the influence of his manager, a man named Iago.

That is well enough: "the vitality of Shakespeare's imagination" makes a world of difference; but it is also not without importance that Shakespeare was a master of dramatic craft and had the tongue and ear of a poet. John Constable headed a Naturalist reaction, but his last words on the subject were, "After all, there is such a thing as the Art," and that truth seems, in much contemporary criticism, to be submerged.

The defect is most noticeable in criticism of poetry. An unfortunate writes a volume of lyrics, and is grimly asked what contribution he has made to thought, and how he dares publish things which betray no awareness of the existence either of Einstein or of Freud, and what is the use of sonnets which contribute nothing to theological reconstruction, and how he dare betray a liking for the institution of the family. But the same over-emphasis is noticeable in criticism generally; and often those very persons who scorn the Victorians for their didacticism and sentimentality have another didacticism and another sentimentality. Preaching the Ten Commandments may be a purely incidental function of the novelists, but so is arguing that all the notes should be left out of the Commandments. "Self-sacrifice," says Miss Drew, cheerfully, "is now quite out of fashion with heroines": this is true

of the novel of the intelligentsia, but what has that to do with art, even though it be a magnificent step forward morally, a milestone towards the millennium? And a shapeless and badly written book remains a shapeless and badly written book even if the author shows quite clearly that he has read all the psycho-analytical treatises that ever were written. In a general way, to-day, the preoccupation with controversy is so great that the purely artistic qualities of books tend to be overlooked, and a man can only get his "technique" noticed if he writes cabalistically or presents his chapters as ropes of sand.

I think that an approach to the subject from another angle than Miss Drew's, with a main eye to the achievements, in the widest sense, of the artist rather than the hasty propagandist, the topical journalist and the satirist of the moment might produce a very interesting book. Miss Drew's principal figures would remain principal figures: there can be little doubt that amongst the juniors of Mr. Hardy and Conrad, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Wells and Mr. Galsworthy must stand out. But they would, particularly the last two, stand out very differently if the most important thing about them were (for the moment) not considered to be their criticisms of society—which, after all might have been made (and, with Mr. Wells, often have been made) in other than fictional form. But some of her favourite subjects might emerge as very inferior artists, however much they may know about disillusionment or adultery, and another incidental result (I think) would be that

THE MODERN NOVEL

show that, in the last few years, the American novel has at least held its own with the English novel. Miss Drew mentions Miss Cather's *A Lost Lady* and Miss Ashmun's *The Lake* (published here by Macmillan's and rather overlooked); she might have mentioned Mr. Stribling's *Fombombo*; she was too early for Mr. John Erskine's *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*, an extraordinarily good and charming book in spite of the title, which at first sight looks Mark Twainish, but is really inevitable. All these books are composed with care, and written with a sense of the value, all the values of words; and they present living and convincing characters, without any taint of the cheapjack desire to exploit the intellectual fads of the moment. To me, at least, one who more often reads novels than he writes about them, the contemporary American novel has often a breath of freshness, an air of genuine artistic endeavour, about it that is rather lacking in the works, fatigued or unhealthily violent, of most of the younger English novelists, who tend to address themselves on "topics" either to an intellectualised London set or to a larger library audience who may be interested in the shibboleths of the day before yesterday, instead of going to life with love and practising an art with patience.

May 30, 1926.

THE MODERN ESSAYIST

MR. ROBERT LYND (Y.Y.) has been writing an essay a week for the *New Statesman* for thirteen years ; which means that by the end of this year he will have completed his seventh hundred. For a proper understanding of his achievement and his aim it is necessary to realise the conditions under which he has written, conditions similar to those under which most other modern essayists, including Messrs. Chesterton, Belloc, and Lucas, have worked. They are severely limited by both time and space. On an appointed day once a week their meditations must be brought to a conclusion ; at the appointed end of a newspaper's column or a sixpenny weekly's three columns their fabric must be snipped short. They must not ask another page because the subject demands it, and they cannot wait another day in order to find what used to be called *le mot juste*. They are journalists, though they may also be endowed with all the gifts of the historic essayists : and they have to do what they can within their limitations, which offer them a " form " and a " problem," " a narrow plot of ground," as Wordsworth called the sonnet.

This should all be borne in mind when the typical modern essayist is being compared or contrasted, with his eminent predecessors or his leisured contemporaries. Montaigne was at

THE MODERN ESSAYIST

liberty, when he pleased, to write an essay of a hundred pages, and Bacon to write one of a quarter of a page. Each of them had "all the time there was," for he was writing unprofessionally and purely for his own amusement. Lamb and Hazlitt did "write for the papers," but intermittently, and mostly for monthlies and quarterlies, which allowed them to wander as they liked, at so much a sheet. These were able, therefore, when they chose, to exhaust their minds on a subject. They could ruminate and make notes, and search their memories for quotations, and write odd paragraphs, and put them in a drawer, and take them out next week, look at them again and add to them; and when all their powers of observation, generalisation, self-scrutiny and memory had done their work, and fancy had played to the point of fatigue, they could still, with a poet's loving care, rearrange and re-proportion their material, vary their melodies, and titivate their epithets. There are still essayists on the ampler scale who proceed thus. Mr. Max Beerbohm, for example, who has been silent for so long that one can only hope that, on his balcony under the serene Italian sky, he is perfecting some immense masterpiece. The artist at his leisure is to be envied: but the craftsman who works to a time-table deserves consideration on his merits. In the last resort his work must be judged without reference to his journalistic necessities, but an understanding of them will carry with it the explanation as to why he does certain things and not certain other things. This may all seem very

SUNDAY MORNINGS

obvious to the intelligent reader. I shouldn't say it were it not that I frequently find misguided critics complaining that our modern essayists lack this or that quality of Montaigne, Lamb, or Walter Pater, so cannot be regarded as essayists at all.

If they must be compared with anyone it should be with the author of the *Ramblers* and *Idlers*, also a journalist. The point about them is : What do they do with this form ? They are allowed from twelve hundred to two thousand words ; they must not be too narrowly sectarian in their interests or attitude, for their public is mixed and numerous ; and they must be ready regularly and to time—which often means (for such are the habits of the writing tribe) great hurry at the last moment. Any honest person who surveys the work which, under these conditions, has been done in the last generation must admit, with whatever surprise, the variety, charm, and novelty of a great deal of it. It may be true that the “ last word on the subject ” is not said by these essayists ; that they do not give us ordered treatises or sustained passages of perfect prose. Their business is with aspects and glimpses and vignettes ; with first thoughts rather than second thoughts ; with such memories as are brought easily to the surface, such conclusions from a life of observation as come with a conversational readiness. Their attraction lies in the range, the universality, the peculiarity of their themes, and the resources of curiosity, knowledge, taste, passion, tenderness, humour, imagination, which

THE MODERN ESSAYIST

they are able to bring immediately to bear upon them. And their art is to secure the effect of completeness and shape whilst working in this very difficult medium.

Snatches from many of these essays come into mind as I write. I think of Mr. Chesterton on Cheeses, beginning with

Stilton thou shouldst be living at this hour,
And so thou art !

and I remember his unique performances with the short spontaneous essay, prodigies of grotesque argument, brief summaries of perennial truths, splendid rhetorical snatches about dark figures against gorgeous sunsets and trumpets sounding at the dawn. Mr. Belloc " On Picking up Moorings " and " The Onion-Eater " I remember, and a passage, exquisitely musical, from an exequy on a dead lady. He differs from the others : his best achievements are brief satirical anecdotes bearing on the defects of our civilisation, and pages about recollected travel and things long past, and solemn meditations over the efforts and the transience of men. To Mr. Lucas the short essay has been principally an outlet for the Wanderer's reflections in *Vanity Fair*, which he likes, and the odd encounters of a booklover in the by-ways of literature. All these men of genius have done fine things with the little essay, though they have also, at times, written mechanically and wearily : and the best of each is very personal to himself. Mr. Lynd is again very distinct ; and he manages,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

as I think, to maintain a high minimum level more successfully than any of them.

Mr. Lynd, amongst these varied practitioners, is the sympathetic sage : the humorous and gentle observer of the heroisms, follies and hobbies of mankind, whose every reflection is coloured by the knowledge that there is good in the worst of us and evil in the best of us, the detached critic who can see all men as small and comic under the sky, yet does not forget that he himself is as small and comic as the rest of them. He is other things than a shrewd observer and a tolerant moralist ; he is a promiscuous reader and a fine critic of literature, and he is an enthusiastic politician. But in his very moments of enthusiasm he is aware of the defects of his cause and of his comrades and of the general characteristics of enthusiasm viewed from the outside ; he is as aware of the weaknesses of literary men and politicians, of whom he is one, as he is of those of revivalists, racing tipsters, and hairdressers, amongst whom he has never been numbered. And he has many habits which assist to give individuality to writings already distinguished by their sagacity. He has a democratic temper which enables him not merely to view the great and the obscure with an equal eye, but leads him naturally to relate the living and the dead : Alexander and Apollonius, Hindenburg and Mr. Bottomley, they are all one to him. His interests are as catholic as possible, ranging from the most exotic forms of literature to the lowest branches of sport. And he has an obscure desire for compensation that leads him to treat nominally

THE MODERN ESSAYIST

great subjects with a tempered levity, and nominally small ones with a tempered solemnity. He has also. . . . Now what is the word? I remember hordes of publishers' extracts in which I have met sentences like "Mr. X. has that rare, that elusive, quality, charm," "Mr. Y. has that indefinable quality, charm," "Mr. Z. had that quality, so valued by Stevenson, charm." Am I to write another sentence like those? Am I (worse still) to see the thing braced tight, pilloried, illuminated in a neighbouring advertisement column next week? No; I will never say that Mr. Lynd has charm! But there is about his writing, *something* rare, *something* elusive, *something* indefinable. . . .

"The School Cap," "The Highbrows," "Noses," "Hats," "Woman" (what a theme for two thousand words!), "Trains," "The Punter," "The Devil:" such are his subjects. Start him anywhere, and he is equally good. And his success with the form is more than ever evident when one comes to quoting him: what looked like a random and rambling series of reflections, reminiscences, and jests becomes apparent as a closely woven texture, with beginning, middle, and end, points made in sequence and a final definite impression. I will quote but one of these. It concludes "The Punter." He is encountered after a bad setback:—

"I ought to have known that Forsetti was going to win. It was only yesterday that I was reading in the 'Sporting Monitor' that

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Forsetti was the best handicapped horse in the race, and that his owner considered that he was better than Rose Prince, who won the race two years ago. But to work, to work," he said bracing his shoulders suddenly, and ringing for two large whiskies and soda. "We fall to rise, are baffled, to fight better." He drew a copy of "Racing Up-to-Date" out of his pocket and opened it. "Let us see," he said, "whether we cannot do a good turn to our wives and children by discovering the winner of the Cambridgeshire."

There is a great deal of Mr. Lynd in that bracketing of Browning with the odds : it is not a mere silly backer, pale and spectacled, that he sees, but hope, courage, romance.

July 18, 1926.

MR. CHESTERTON'S VERSE

MR. CHESTERTON'S verse, lost amid the multitude of his miscellaneous writings, has never had its due. Men are, in any event, slow to recognise the achievements in one quarter of the literary field of a man who is constantly popping up in all its quarters. People like clear definition and a label. If a writer produce a little good verse, and nothing else, he is evidently a poet, and will be sympathetically considered as such. He has put on the cloak and the fine frenzy; he has removed himself from the daily dust; he has retired within the temple of the muses, and the passers-by will doff their hats. Thus some of the greatest have done; though not Shakespeare with his box-office, or Milton with his desk in Whitehall, and his tracts about bishops and divorce. The others, until they are dead and removed, have a more uncertain status; can a man be really a poet whom one may encounter at any moment in any street, bar, or newspaper, who cheerfully maintains his family, and will argue with the nearest person to hand about land-tenures or the marriage laws? Must not a poet (the illusion dates from the Romantic Revival) be remarkably unlike other men in all respects, unfailingly solemn, remote, ecstatic. Some of the Victorian artists played the rôle well, showing the public little of what was

SUNDAY MORNINGS

known to their familiars, successfully concealing even their sense of humour. Some of our own contemporaries have achieved the same result, quiet men with no impulse, and no need, to write a line which is not quintessential. But there are others, journalists by profession, or propagandists by calling, who cannot keep out of the marketplace, and forfeit respect because of the very fullness of their humanity and the very comprehensiveness of their zest for life. Mr. Chesterton is one of these.

His poetry, as it were, has been hidden by the dust he has raised. And beyond that, it has not been well presented. His admirers have had to look for it in a dozen small scattered volumes, and in the files of old newspapers. Here at last it is all brought together: all that is, except the latest, and not very important, little collection. The publisher, who must have been involved in a great labour of negotiation, is to be congratulated on bringing together 350 pages of verse from such a variety of sources, and on the imagination which made him wish to publish the book. Better printing, as regards type, space, and impression would have been welcome; so also a table of contents at the beginning: in future editions, of which there must be many, the physical defects of the book may be remedied. The fact remains that we have here, in the intermittent work of an unflagging publicist and man-of-letters a body of good, and diversely good, work which would suffice to make reputations for a dozen small dedicated poets, and a body of less good verse,

MR. CHESTERTON'S VERSE

which remains interesting because only one man and one craftsman could have written it.

A great deal of Mr. Chesterton's verse has serious, though usually not ruinous, faults. He is a very exuberant man. The coupling of complete, and full-blooded, self-expression with fastidious care is unusual. Carefulness normally leads to cramping and timidity, and gusto to carelessness. Mr. Chesterton has always scorned to conceal even his most "vulgar" tastes, and he has let his genius take him wheresoever it would. If the pomposity of an under-secretary moves him to compose a metrical squib, he composes, rather rapidly, the metrical squib. Having composed it he publishes it; having published it, he reprints it. It may amuse others, as it has amused him; it would be hypocritical to pretend that he had not written such things; anyhow, how can they make any difference, one way or the other, to the merits of his love sonnets or his religious odes? The mixture does no harm; it is all to the credit of his honesty in a frightened neighbour-watching age; it is a great thing that on one page there is to be found a poem beginning, "A word came forth in Galilee, a word like to a star," and on the next one which opens with "Jones had a dog: it had a chain." But the fine spontaneity, the devouring zest, the unaffected willingness to engage (for he constantly sees the eternal behind the temporal) in any ephemeral controversy with any obscure combatant, do carry with them a tendency to be content with improvisation, where second thoughts might mean improvement, and to present the

SUNDAY MORNINGS

public indifferently with fine and momentous poems side by side with trifles that are anything but "tremendous trifles."

Mr. Chesterton is very careless and rather indiscriminating; he also has a propensity to rhetoric. Years ago he wrote an essay in which he described his notion of bliss. It was to lie on his back in bed and paint large sweeping fantasies on the ceiling with a brush ten feet long in the handle. For all I know he may now actually do this, at Beaconsfield, every morning. But he has always done the equivalent thing in print. He "chucks it about" in chunks. The unit is not the word, but the phrase, which is marked by all the stigmata which sometimes captivate, and sometimes irritate, in his prose. The less excellent of his poems are bewildering webs of rhetorical phrases, which roar like cataracts, but convey the vaguest impression of their meaning, sometimes because their sweep carries one away before one can look at them, sometimes because it has carried the author away before *he* could look at them. He is intoxicated with words, words that blare like trumpets, or reverberate like thunder; the more of them there are together the merrier he will be; his fine economical felicities come in pauses of the tumult; for the rest it is hit or miss. Metaphors and similes tumble over each other in the eloquent flood; alliterations charm the ear and distract the attention; antithetical constructions superficially titillate the reader so that too often the profound meaning which lies beneath them escapes him:—

MR. CHESTERTON'S VERSE

The wind blew out from Bergen from the
dawning to the day,
There was a wreck of trees and fall of towers
a score of miles away,
And drifted like a livid leaf I go before its
tide,
Spewed out of house and stable, beggared of
flag and bride.
The heavens are bowed about my head,
shouting like seraph wars,
With rains that might put out the sun and
clean the sky of stars,
Rains like the fall of ruined seas from secret
worlds above,
The roaring of the rains of God none but the
lonely love.
Feast in my hall, O foemen, and eat, and drink
and drain,
You never loved the sun in heaven as I have
loved the rain.

His defects are the defects of his qualities ; his ear for splendid sound, his intellectual agility, his natural un-self-conscious copiousness. Lesser men often have fewer obvious faults ; and, were he scrupulously to use the file, something would go besides the clogging epithets, the inaccuracies and superfluities, the pot-shots, the rhetorical counters, the automatic Swinburnian alliterations and the lazy obscurities. Such characteristic weaknesses as he has are chiefly evident in those poems (such as " St. Barbara," of which I can scarcely understand a line), in which he limits himself to the extent of being wholly serious ; he is most frequently flawless when the whole man

SUNDAY MORNINGS

speaks in verses wherein irony covers passion, and religion is wedded to buffoonery, and romance to puns : the challenges of a Falstaffian Quixote and the quips of a Puck in Paradise. The greatest of all his poems, "Lepanto" and "The Ballad of the White Horse," hardly come into this category ; they are the work of an artist more impersonal than usual, and engrossed in his theme. Sometimes, when Mr. Chesterton is chivalrously declamatory, one has a feeling that he has braced himself to it. Not so in "Lepanto" where his gorgeous vision has entire hold of him ; not so either in the quieter, graver tributes and lamentations of "The White Horse," in which an old story has served him as a vehicle for all that he most deeply feels about the life of man, and only occasional side-glances are thrown at his modern bugbears. But beyond these and a few shorter poems, though many are starred with glorious lines, the most memorable of his poems are of the kind described.

When Mr. Chesterton visited Warsaw recently the papers stated that he was accompanied from the station to his quarters by a squadron of glittering Polish cavalry : a pleasing attention, only his due, and one that I am sure he heartily appreciated. But a thoroughly adequate escort for him would include not merely armed horsemen, but cohorts of magicians, clowns, princesses, priests, kings, vegetarians, Puritans, drunkards, landlords, politicians, millionaires, minstrels and dragons : all of whom are among the materials out of which he has made the fairy-tale world of

MR. CHESTERTON'S VERSE

his poems. The fairy-tales always have a point : it was long ago said that Mr. Chesterton's value as a moralist was largely based on the fact that he made virtue amusing. Yet even when he is most vigorously jousting against slimy monsters or caitiff knights his spear usually has a few balloons tied on to it, and can be used, when he tires of the more formal tourney, as a quarterstaff or even a slapstick. His jests are mingled with his protestations of anger and love, as his newspaper magnates are mingled with his medieval knights. Tom Hood and Hans Andersen meet in him ; he has one foot in fairyland and another in Fleetstreet—a logical development of which image might lead to the conclusion that this most persuasive of men was a centipede. Consider the series of Ballades and the " Songs of Education," Consider the mingling of sheer poetry and foolery, sentiment and irony, golden oratory and extravagant colloquialism in the songs from *The Flying Inn*, where the moods flit over the surface of the stanzas like cloud-shadows over the downs : "The Song against Songs," "The Good Rich Man," "The Saracen's Head," "The Song of Quoodle," "The Rolling English Road," and that intoxicating song about the elusive town of Roundabout, which begins with Guy of Warwick, ends with Lancelot and Merlin, and has for its middle portion this :—

Some say that Robin Goodfellow,
Whose lantern lights the meads

(The stock exchange Sir Walter Scott

SUNDAY MORNINGS

In heaven no longer needs),
Such dance around the trysting-place
The moonstruck lover leads ;
Which superstition I should scout,
There is more faith in honest doubt
(As Tennyson has pointed out)
Than in those nasty creeds.

But peace and righteousness (St. John)
In Roundabout can kiss,
And since that's all that's found about
The pleasant town of Roundabout,
The roads they simply bound about
To find out where it is.

In many of the political poems, notably the superb Ode to Lord Birkenhead, there is the same unique mixture, chemical compound rather : elements which no deliberate artifice could blend, being perfectly united by sheer force of spontaneity. Tom Hood was mentioned just now. Our fathers were familiar with two volumes, one entitled *Hood's Serious Poems*, and the other, *Hood's Humorous Poems*. A publisher who should endeavour thus to divide the Chestertonian sheep and goats would soon discover most of them to be hybrids. Comic poetry is as rare as comic verse is common ; Mr. Chesterton has written more comic poetry than any Englishman on record. And, to complicate the achievement, he has contrived to make a great deal of it didactic, without falling into the perils that beset didacticism.

His work, in verse as in prose, will have a definite influence. He expresses many opinions

MR. CHESTERTON'S VERSE

with vigour and an instinctive forensic genius. Many of them, notably those which bear particularly upon industrial civilisation, have been expressed by others, and are widely shared, though his remedies are perhaps not as generally approved as his diagnoses. But it is not as a critic of current politics, or of political history, that he is most especially remarkable, great though may be his gifts in these regards. His greatest distinction lies in the hold he has upon the fundamentals of human life, considered both in its social and its metaphysical aspects. In an age of new questions he has reiterated old answers; in an age of scepticism he has laughed at the laughers with a hilarity less hollow than theirs; in an age which tends to excuse baseness, even when it does not explain it away, he has flown the banners of honour, fidelity, and generosity; in an age of mass-regimentation he has stood for the sanctities of the individual soul. And above all—a fact in whose presence all his levities, quibbles, occasional injustices, easy assumptions, and prejudices pale into insignificance—living in a period when the value of life itself has been widely questioned (and, by that very fact, impoverished) he has maintained that “it is something to have been,” showing the world the spectacle of one man enjoying the thousand miracles of the day, though the sword of Damocles hang over his head as it hangs over the heads of us all. There lies his “optimism”; not in any shallow Panglossian delusions, either about the present or about the future. In point of fact this self-proclaimed

SUNDAY MORNINGS

optimist habitually maintains that society has gone most of the way to the dogs, and will probably complete the course. "Earth will grow worse 'ere men redeem it, And wars more evil 'ere all wars cease." It was his early prophecy and he cannot have repented it. But still they shall hear :—

The strange, strong, cry in the darkness,
Of one man praising God.

Such a talker makes one talk. I have quoted less than I intended, but can scarcely have avoided disclosing my conviction that Mr. Chesterton is one of the most delightful and fortifying of poets. Those who are already familiar with the corpus of his work will be glad to know that several poems in this volume have appeared in no other. Amongst them are some parodies and several satirical pieces from the right mint. "The New Omar" is one, though it be so jovial as not to wound. It opens :—

A book of verses underneath the bough,
Provided that the verses do not scan,
A loaf of bread, a jug of wine and Thou,
Short-haired, all angles, looking like a man.

"O Paradise were wilderness enow" is the conclusion. It must also be mine though I should like to have quoted "A Patriotic Song" and "A Ballad of Abbreviations."

July 3, 1927.

MR. WELLS

WHAT a world the man must survey who attempts to review the *Works* of Mr. H. G. Wells, of that eager, indefatigable mind which has, for a generation and more, flung out ideas on every sort of subject in such unexampled profusion! Short stories, essays, utopias, novels, political pamphlets, scientific treatises: the range and variety is amazing. Here, in this edition, the whole of it (with the exception of certain fugitive works which the author prefers to forget) is in process of presentation. As one looks at them again, one quails before such energy and zest.

In his preface Mr. Wells (appending a delightfully interesting, detached, and candid autobiographical sketch) surveys this great mass himself. It is instructive to observe his own reactions. He pays little attention to the merits of his books as additions to English literature, which may be enjoyed by the just and the unjust. He remarks (convincingly) that *The First Men in the Moon* is the best of his scientific romances; he commends, rather surprisingly, *The Purple Pileus* among his early short stories; and of *Tono Bungay* he says:—

After the completion of "Kipps" and "The Days of the Comet," the writer set himself to write as good and spacious a novel as he could. It was to give a view of the contemporary

SUNDAY MORNINGS

social and political system in Great Britain, an old and degenerating system, tried and strained by new inventions and new ideas and invaded by a growing multitude of adventurers. . . . The writer is disposed to regard it as the finest and most finished novel upon the accepted lines that he has written or is ever likely to write. . . . His subsequent books are either shorter or smaller in design, or, in cases where there is much to be said, as, for example, in "Joan and Peter" and "Mr. Britling Sees It Through," they are planned and written with far less restraint and care.

All his readers will probably agree with this ; some, I think, may prefer *The War of the Worlds* and *The Invisible Man* to any of Mr. Wells's so-called "novels." To me he has never been a novelist, though his novels are full of fine descriptions and exciting discussions. His people seem to me puppets ; his incidents either forced or unconvincingly transferred from life. The novels are the novels of a poet writing with too little "restraint and care" and too little interest in the differences that distinguish human character ; of an enthusiastic sociologist, also, who regards his people as types to illustrate an argument. In the scientific romances, where the people hardly pretend to be real, much greater success is achieved. Yet we all know that even were all Mr. Wells's fiction, good and bad, destroyed, he would remain a remarkable figure and force. Such a zest for the epic story of mankind rarely comes ; and it suffuses everything he writes, down to the most

MR. WELLS

trivial newspaper article. This it is, rather than any set body of principle or dogma, that unites all his work into a homogeneous whole: this, and a perception of the inadequacy of human thought ever to express the polymorphic truth about things. He goes through life in a questing frenzy, exclaiming at the magnificence or the stupidity of everything he sees; yet all the time he is conscious that what he sees is but the foam on some larger sea below.

Of this edition fourteen volumes have been published and more are to come, each volume furnished with its little preface. The model may well have been one of the standard editions of Stevenson: the "Vailima" is the nearest to it. The print and paper are good, the photogravure frontispieces interesting; the binding is of stout, red buckram, with pleasant italic lettering in gold. It is a relief to handle a modern collected edition which it is possible to touch more than five minutes after one's bath: these perpetual white covers on editions-de-luxe are a great nuisance. Six hundred sets only are available for sale in the United Kingdom. Why the "Atlantic" Edition, I cannot make out. "Transatlantic" would have had some sort of meaning, for the book is printed in the U.S.A. "Atlantic" might have suited Conrad; but if the precedents of the Swanston Stevenson and the Mellstock Hardy were to be followed at all, something far more characteristic than the "Atlantic" might have been found. There is a hotel in Paris called the "Hotel of the Universe and of Portugal"; or, as the old book had it,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

"the infinitely Big and the infinitely Little." Mr. Wells's native heath, as novelist and speculator, one feels to be the Universe and Tooting, and his coat of arms should be a bowler hat on a field of stars. He roams all space, or he perches on some architectural eczema of the urban fringe where the undying fire may be found in some unprepossessing vessel, or the splendours of the eternal may be most effectively contrasted with the squalors of the temporal. The Betelgeuse Edition, or the Southend Edition, or the Sirius Edition, or the Balham Edition, or the Ponder's End Edition, or the Aldebaran Edition. But not the Atlantic: as Lord Mersea is alleged to have remarked, that may be left for what the papers call "an eminent legal luminary."

And, not to put too fine a point on it, why this edition at all? Mr. Wells is not, as some greater and some lesser writers are, a "Collectors' Man." He was not built to decorate the glass-fronted book-shelves of the dilettante bachelor in the Albany. The volume and looseness of him must appal the fastidious æsthete; and the ordinary book-lover, who merely likes a well-furnished library, would much prefer to have Mr. Wells's best books in handy cheap editions rather than the whole, or nearly the whole, of his writings in the bulky form that suits the standard author of whom we are unwilling to lose a word. The urgent topicality of much of Mr. Wells's writing seems to wage a strange conflict with the sedate, the dignified, the removed, the established form of this edition.

MR. WELLS

I think Mr. Wells is conscious of this himself. Readers of the *Letters of Henry James*, who was one of Mr. Wells's first admirers, will remember that James in vain tried to persuade Mr. Wells to be a careful artist, and that Mr. Wells point blank told James that he regarded his calling as journalism rather than art. Readers of that very puckish and entertaining work *Boon*, will recall that Mr. Wells there inserted a parody of James which was extremely funny and clever, but seemed rather unkind and even rather obtuse: appearing to carry with it the implication that what James did so magnificently was not worth doing. "A hippopotamus picking up a pea" was the phrase that summed up the stated and implied argument. In his introduction to the first volume of this edition Mr. Wells, one of whose finest qualities (except when he is momentarily dominated by that puckishness, or by resentment) is a generous, an unreservedly generous, admiration for, and encouragement of, the work of his contemporaries, at once reiterates the old affirmation and makes noble amends to Henry James. He says:—

These collected writings aim at something in the flattest contrast with—shall I call it?—the processional dignity of such a collection as that of the works of Henry James. Such works are essentially triumphs of conception and treatment, things in themselves completed, finished, and presented, they stand or fall as that; these, on the contrary, are essentially comments and enhancements of the interests of life itself. Possibly these writings, in whole

SUNDAY MORNINGS

or in part, are literature, but certainly with one exception to be noted in its place, they are not Works of Art. It is far truer to call them Journalism than Art.

A certain defect of understanding, or at any rate, of statement, is still visible here. Those who feel profoundly in the debt of Henry James are not thankful to him only for phrases and paragraphs perfectly shaped and images perfectly recorded : from him also we have had those " comments and enhancements of the interest of life." *The Golden Bowl* may, if you look superficially at the theme, be concerned only with the establishment of a relation between two pairs of " idle rich " persons, three Americans and an Italian, and an English background ; yet that also enriches all the subsequent experience of those who digest it, that also opens windows to eternity, and that also is even of value in one's political education.

The thing about Mr. Wells that baffled and bewildered Henry James was that a man who had so great a creative passion, such faculties of observation, so great a power over the language, should be content to do less than his best as an artist, should have (apparently) so great a contempt for the careful artist, and should spend so much of his time arguing provisionally about the ephemeral. James had his limitations, too : he never felt (save only during the war) his duty as propagandist ; he was content to record unpleasant changes without fighting against them, to indicate a higher civilisation without organising

MR. WELLS

for it. These two, bound together only by genius, were as the poles apart. Mr. Wells must be up and doing. He is, as he says, no committeeman, but he must at least provide the committees with something to think about. If Mr. Shaw is the Voltaire of his generation, Mr. Wells is the Rousseau: he may have all kinds of artistic gifts, but the job that interests him is persuasion. The World Can Be Set Free by more machinery and more love.

It is well enough. There is no thinking man of Mr. Wells's generation, or the generation immediately younger, who is not deeply in Mr. Wells's debt. Many of us may react against his criticisms: but at least they make us re-examine, and brace us to refurbish, the institutions which we would defend against him. As a polemist he has been one of the greatest stimulants of his time; as a propagandist, ranging over man's spiritual and material possibilities here, he has been endlessly suggestive. His mind roves over the whole surface of society, suggesting here a new kind of personal relation and here a new kind of vacuum cleaner. All is fishy that comes to his net, and he is prepared to improve it.

This makes him a great social servant. From another point of view, it must be remarked that such of his reforms as are adopted will (by virtue of their adoption) make his propaganda out of date, and that such of them as are turned down or outmoded will have an equal effect. He has confessedly and deliberately chosen (for much of his time) to be journalist rather than artist,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

having great powers as an artist : the journalist, his work done, lapses into oblivion. So, argues Mr. Wells, does the artist. In one of these new prefaces he states the view that in course of time all works of art, however great, must lose their value and their interest. Two things here he seems to me to overlook.

The first is that the death which, in time, sooner or later overtakes works of art, similarly overtakes other human enterprises. However short the life of art, the life of journalism is shorter. The other is that he has never quite decided whether or not to think in terms of Time, as we commonly conceive it. He is capable (none more so), whether in his scientific or his theological works, of transcending time. Yet the moment he is set upon contrasting the useful work of the evolutionary reformer with the self-indulgent play of the pure artist, terrestrial Time completely dominates his notions. At the end of *Back to Methuselah* Mr. Shaw (who has much in common, if they will pardon me, with Mr. Wells) depicts a scene which takes place "As Far as Thought Can Reach." People have got a long way : they are hatched from eggs : which seems very dull to me. But, on that plane of time and the physical theory about the Earth, it is distinctly *not* "as far as thought can reach." Thought can reach as far as the earth's beginnings in fire, and as far as the earth's end in frost. Herbert Trench magnificently sang that cold conclusion in his *Requiem of Archangels*. "The vine, the woman, and the rose" will have gone ; so also the "Methu-

MR. WELLS

selahs," the eggs, Ibsen, aeroplanes, and the really hygienic house. The artist knows that the really true philosophy and the really adequate synthesis would have a place too for him ; that the difference is not between one talent and another, but between the man who wrapped his talent in a napkin and the man who used it ; that he also serves who only sits and makes sonnets. Mr. Wells is a greater man than most sonnet writers, but he has scarcely grasped this truth. The servants of " God the Invisible King " need not be all engineers, or even journalists.

November 29, 1925.

MR. LAWRENCE'S POEMS

At a very reasonable price in a very pleasant binding, Mr. Secker has now collected Mr. D. H. Lawrence's *Poems* in two volumes. The enterprise is to be applauded. Mr. Lawrence is not always a poet, but he is always himself. Good or bad, he is himself, and symptomatic of his time. Three-quarters of his poems must irritate either the man who is fastidious about expression and form or the man who dislikes crude generalisations about life as a whole or indiscreet revelations of the life of an individual. The fact remains that Mr. Lawrence, passionate, brooding, glowering, worshipping man is undoubtedly a man of genius and big and fiery enough to eat a dozen of his merely clever contemporaries.

The two volumes are headed, one *Rhyming Poems* and the other *Unrhyming Poems*. It well exemplifies Mr. Lawrence's logic that the second volume contains a considerable number of the poems in rhyme. He did not arrange this as a feeble, practical joke, probably ; he merely did not notice. He is too febrile, hectic, full of blood and haunted by dreams to be precise about title-pages and the arrangement of books. That is the defect of his qualities. We may be, as we are, fairly certain that his work will not be logically arranged, or even arranged as he says it will be ; but we know he will never be dull, and we know, before

MR. LAWRENCE'S POEMS

we open his volumes, that even his preface will not be perfunctory. The ordinary Englishman, great or small, great as Lord Tennyson or small as Mr. Snooks, when he publishes his collected poems, is moved to write in the most impersonal way, suggesting that he has preserved what was least incompetent from among his compositions, and that he is prepared to stand or fall by his readers' judgment of him as an artist. There is none of this reticence about Mr. Lawrence. He does not, like most poets, wear his heart on his sleeve in his poetry, and almost refuse to tell the time to an unIntroduced stranger when poetry is not being written. All his vitals are on exhibition, and he doesn't mind who knows it. Not for him one of these bowing and smirking introductions in which "I have to thank" and "my thanks are due to"; Mr. Lawrence thanks nobody and he curses only himself. He contrives (which is a very unusual thing) to write a thoroughly interesting and candid introduction. He has, he says, tried to arrange the poems in chronological order:—

The first poems I ever wrote, if poems they were, was when I was nineteen: now twenty-three years ago. I remember perfectly the Sunday afternoon when I perpetrated those first two pieces: "To Guelder-Roses" and "To Champions"; in springtime, of course, and, as I say, in my twentieth year. Any young lady might have written them and been pleased with them.

"Nous avons changé tout cela!" No respectable

SUNDAY MORNINGS

young lady could, or at any rate should, be pleased with a good deal that Mr. Lawrence has written since that day. What precisely were the defects of these poems we are not allowed to see : Mr. Lawrence does not print them in his collected edition. But he does say " I never ' liked ' my real poems as I liked ' To Guelder-Roses.' " It is a strange confession. He writes his poems on theory, and he judges them on theory. " How beautiful " he thinks of something that he has written ; then, pulling himself up, he says : " Tear it up, I like it."

This is revelatory : so is another statement. " It seems to me," says he,

that no poetry, not even the best, should be judged as if it existed in the absolute, in the vacuum of the absolute. Even the best poetry, when it is all personal, needs the penumbra of its own time and place and circumstance to make it full and whole. If we knew a little more of Shakespeare's self and circumstance, how much more complete the Sonnets would be to us, how their strange, torn edges would be softened and merged into a whole body ! So one would like to ask the reader of " Look ! We Have Come Through ! " to fill in the background of the poems, as far as possible, with the place, the time, the circumstance.

He is afraid of what he likes ; and he is anxious that what he writes should be interpreted in the light of his life. He has no idea of letting himself go without reserve ; and he does not suppose himself to be setting down generalisations which

MR. LAWRENCE'S POEMS

would be valid, as those of the great epic and lyric poets will be valid, even if all record of his individual biography were lost.

Mr. Lawrence must be read in the light of these statements ; and of his other statement that " the things the young man says are very rarely poetry. So I have tried to let the demon say his say, and to remove the passages where the young man intruded." He is, in other words, a limited, a writhing, a bewildered poet : honest, muscular, out of touch with ordinary mankind, afraid of himself and afraid of others, at one moment surrendering to beauty, at the next tortured by the thought that the surrender may have been too easy. A philosophy nobody but a solemn ass will ever get out of Mr. Lawrence : he is a poet, a brooder, an introspective sensualist : a man capable of violent flights towards the ideal and violent revulsions against it : but quite incapable of philosophic generalisation, or any such understanding of other people as would make him feel that his experiences were universal. His form is not usually lyric : but for what he is worth he is in the category of Heine, Burns, and Catullus, though these were all better artists than he : the interest goes out of his work if there is no interest in himself.

There will be, I think. Nobody up to the present (though one knows not what the future may hold) has called Mr. D. H. Lawrence lovable. He confides enough, in all conscience : if concordats could be made on the basis of confessions about fleshly weaknesses, we should all feel that

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Mr. Lawrence had sounded the "All Clear." He is not, however, one of those who speaks for the rest of us : he is a self-willed, obstinate, shrinking, sometimes snarling, outlaw who speaks for himself and suggests that he is speaking more for us than we are willing to admit. We do not admit it : he reiterates what he has said. The supernatural does not interest him, and he has no views about it. But he sees forces at work in the world, sexual forces and egoistical forces, which do interest him. Mr. Lawrence might almost have been possessed by Pan. On the very first page of these volumes we come across this :—

Rabbits, handfuls of brown earth, lie
Low-rounded on the mournful turf they have
 bitten down to the quick.
Are they asleep—are they living ?
 —Now see, when I
Lift my arms, the hill bursts and heaves under
 their spirting kick !

The urge of life : the pullulation : the violence ;
these are always present to him. So also that
other pagan thing, the conflict of sex. He was a
very young man when he wrote :—

Within the house two voices arose, a slender
 lash
Whistling she-delirious rage, and the dreadful
 sound
Of a male thing booming and bruising, until
 it had drowned
The other voice in a silence of blood, 'neath
 the voice of the ash.

MR. LAWRENCE'S POEMS

The poems he has written since then, whether good or bad, are mostly on the lines of these early ones. Mr. Lawrence is acutely aware of the physical which leads to ordinary violence, and the physical that leads to sexual violence. He once, in a prose book, expressed a wish that he could be a whale, a great ten-thousand-gallon sack of blood with hardly any brain at all. He cannot get away from blood, and he cannot get away from sexual attraction : on occasion he mixes the two, a killer-man proceeding from the slaughter of rabbits to the conquest of a woman. "Flesh," "Slinking," "Procreant," "Fecund" : those, and many other such words appear frequently in these poems. There is a long series of poems, extraordinarily good, so far as they go, on tortoises ; culminating in verses on the sexual ecstasies of tortoises. The tortoises get to the point of screaming with love : "the voice of the turtle is heard in the land." Nothing could be more skilful, journalistically, than the descriptions of the lumbering tortoises under their hard shells, the peering heads, the wrinkled necks, the crinkled trousers, the flat paws, the stumpy tails. Nothing could be more sympathetic than Mr. Lawrence's attitude towards the tortoises when love-stricken : and he enters, with equal eagerness, into the feelings of the turkey-cock, the fish, the snake, and the kangaroo. With regard to the last two he is especially good : anybody who admires Mr. Ralph Hodgson's *The Bull* may be recommended to peruse Mr. Lawrence's poems on other vigorous, if unrefined animals. Yet, after all his contortions,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

all his desperate efforts to escape the normal, all his admirations of cruel physical manifestations, coils and springs, fangs and yellow eyes, it is probable that the admiration of his readers will return at last to those few simple poems in which he does not bother to express his differences from other people, or to justify his sexual career : such poems as, for example, *Giorno dei Monti*, which begins, in a quite unsophisticated manner :—

Along the avenue of cypresses,
All in their scarlet cloaks and surplices
Of linen, go the chanting choristers,
The priests in gold and black, the villagers . . .

Here there is something that affects everybody ; there is also musical sound. When Mr. Lawrence “kicks” he tends not merely to say things which do not universally appeal, but to say them unmusically. Form does count, in spite of what he says about the supplementary information that may be given by biography : the greatest works would be very little impaired were nothing known about the authors. Mr. Lawrence is a very modern product : a man who protests violently against everything that has been proposed to him, a man excited, humourless, unorthodox at every point. But he is at least a man of genius and not a mere exhibitionist or wit. Even his weakest novels embody the struggles of a soul : and his poems are better than his novels.

October 7, 1928.

YOUTH

THE *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* is not what hasty observers may assume. We are most of us familiar with the sort of volumes—*Fox-Hunting Memories, A Fox-Hunter's Stories, Days at the Covertside, Sunlit Hours with Rod and Gun*—in which cheery sportsmen tell cheery anecdotes about other cheery sportsmen, and turn a fondly retrospective eye towards the longest runs, strongest scents, highest birds, and most ferocious fish in their experience. Very pleasant reading for those who like that kind of reading; and particularly for those who know the scenes and personages referred to, those who do, indeed, remember "the great days with the P.Q.R. in the 'eighties under the Best of Masters," who can affectionately recall "the apple-cheeks of Old Tom the Huntsman," who have their own store of tales about "Thruster" Dumbleton and "Pinky" Browne, and who have met a man who met a man who knew Bay Middleton. Examine, however, the title of this present book. Is there not a slight difference in it? Does not the word "Memoirs" connote a certain contact with literature? Has not the "Fox-Hunting Man" a certain flavour of detachment, as though the author were watching himself humorously, ironically, from the outside? I don't think I am being fantastic. At any rate, it is very far from being an ordinary book, and its

SUNDAY MORNINGS

anonymous author is very far from being an ordinary author.

This does not mean that the book is being sold on false pretences. Far from it. Hunting occupies most of the space in the book, and it is hunting faithfully and lovingly described. What space is not occupied by hunting is devoted to the surroundings, personal and landscape, of hunting ; to Point-to-Point races ; to cricket ; and, towards the end (it comes in as a foil, a completion and a new beginning), to the war. The author was certainly a " Fox-hunting Man." It is true that on his first day out, as a very little boy, he shocked another little boy and disgraced himself by saying (as the fox slunk out of the wood) " Don't do that, they'll catch him." But he contrived later, to suppress his pity for the fox ; he learned gradually to ride ; he acquired better and better horses as time went on ; he twice won, after school and Cambridge had been entered and passed, the Hunt Heavy-Weight race ; and, just before the war, he spent a winter in the shires living *tête-à-tête* with the Master of a great Hunt, and hunting four days a week. He does not pose as a preternatural horseman ; it is evident that he was a good one and that until the war came he thoroughly enjoyed himself. Where he differed (though he did not realise this until later) from the ordinary hunting man and, indeed, from the ordinary man of whatever pursuit or profession, was in the degree of his æsthetic awareness and the reality of his self-consciousness. He observed, he felt, he thought—being that rare thing a poet—in

YOUTH

the hunting field as he would have observed, felt, and thought had he been at sea like Conrad or voyaging over the desert like Doughty. And the kind of eyes that were brought to bear upon these experiences is indicated in those early chapters wherein, with a precision which resembles Mr. de la Mare's, the life of childhood (spent with a comfortable aunt in the country) is recovered and the dreams of a sensitive and intelligent child haunted by thoughts of "over the hills and far away."

Seldom, indeed, does one meet with a book which gives so forcibly the impression of truth, reflected without distortion. The work is alleged to be fiction based on fact ; the reader will find it difficult to believe that it is anything but fact, with a few names changed, so specific and characteristic are the details in the scenes described, so rounded and convincing the portraits of people. We begin with a child being brought up in the country by an aunt, a perfect old female servant, and an equally perfect groom, who is very keen to bring "Master George" up in the way he should go. Pony and cob and thumping great hunter, the horses succeed each other ; each little triumph of Master George's is shared at home, and with each success he finds he has made headway with the hard-bitten men, squarsons, soldiers, agents, and farmers, with whom he rides and with whom he thought at first he could never make terms. The boy, after coming down from the University, finds he has £600 a year, which needs husbanding. It never occurs to him that he can do anything

SUNDAY MORNINGS

better with it than spend it (now scattering money, now pinching) on hunting, with a little inexpensive cricket to fill up the summer months. But, though the older self now deplores the insouciant self-indulgence and social irresponsibility of the younger self, it is clear that the younger self was an artist who was perpetually storing the honey which now benefits the older self. "I will not," says our author when mentioning his first meet, "invent details which I cannot remember, since I was too awed and excited and self-conscious to be capable of observing anything clearly." Memory does not again fail, and we never have the slightest suspicion that "invention" is taking place. This very hunt, which is introduced by the inadequately remembered meet, is presented in detail with a series of vivid glimpses. Not the least striking is that of dialogues between Lord Dumborough and an uncongenial keeper, who has the misfortune to work for an employer who is keen on pheasants:—

Looking round I saw a surly-featured, elderly man with side-whiskers; he was on foot and wore the weathered garments of a gamekeeper.

"What the hell do you mean by leaving the main-earth unstopped?" the infuriated voice continued.

"Very sorry, m'lord," the man mumbled, "but I never heard you was coming till this morning, and——"

"Don't answer me back. I'll get you sacked for this when Major Gamble comes down from Scotland. I tell you I'm sick of you and your

YOUTH

god-damned pheasants," and before the man could say any more the outraged nobleman was pushing his way into the undergrowth again and was bawling, "Go on to Hoath Wood, Jack," to the invisible huntsman.

The boy's second day out opens thus :—

The meet itself was an intensified rendering of an initiatory one. I was awed by my consciousness of having come twelve miles from home. And the scene was made significant by the phrase, "One of their best meets." In the light of that phrase everything appeared a little larger than life : voices seemed louder, coats a more raucous red, and the entire atmosphere more acute with imminent jeopardy than at Finchwest Green. Hard-bitten hunting men rattled up in gigs, peeled off their outer coverings, and came straddling along the crowded lane to look for their nags. Having found them, they spoke in low tones to the groom and swung themselves importantly into the saddle, as though there were indeed some desperate business in hand.

Every hour of a hunting day is described, and every tempo. Here is the end of a day :—

On one of my expeditions, after a stormy night, at the end of March, the hounds drew all day without finding a fox. This was my first experience of a "blank day." But I wasn't as much upset about it as I ought to have been, for the sun was shining and the primrose bunches were brightening in the woods.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Not many people spoke to me, so I was able to enjoy hacking from one covert to another, and acquiring an appetite for my tea at the "Blue Anchor." And after that it was pleasant to be riding home in the latening twilight; to hear the "chink-chink" of thrushes against the looming leafless woods, and the afterglow of sunset; and to know that winter was at an end. Perhaps the old horse felt it, too, for he had settled into the rhythm of an easy striding walk instead of his customary joggle.

I can see the pair of us clearly enough; myself, with my brow-pinching bowler hat tilted on to the back of my head, staring, with the ignorant face of a callow young man, at the dusky landscape and the glimmering, wet fields. And Harkaway with his three white socks caked in mud, his "goose-rump" and his little ears cocked well forward. I can hear the creak of the saddle and the clop and clink of hoofs as we cross the bridge over the brook by Dundell Farm; there is a light burning in the farmhouse window, and the evening star glitters above a broken drift of half-luminous cloud. "Only three miles more, old man," I say, slipping to the ground to walk alongside of him for a while.

It is with a sigh that I remember simple moments such as those, when I understood so little of the deepening sadness of life, and only the strangeness of the spring was knocking at my heart.

The excitement, the content, the immaturity, the poignancy: these are all present in every re-

YOUTH

collection he gives us, whether of runs or races, flower-shows or cricket matches, social occasions or quiet tired evenings over the fire. It might have gone on for years: the war intervened: and the narrator drifted into the war. He began as a private in the Yeomanry, and he went to the front as an officer in the Infantry.

There is no space here even to summarise his account, at once very sensitive and very sensible, of his war experiences up to the point at which his dearest friend was killed. These chapters, unforced and undemonstrative, blinking no horrors and ignoring no trivial enjoyments, appear to me to be as truthful as anything that has ever appeared on the war: and they are but the epilogue to a book which is really about the vanished pre-war life of the young man about country. The last lines are sad, almost bitter: the cruelty of war shows no signs of ending, and good men are being killed every day:—

And here I was, with my knobkerrie in my hand, staring across at the enemy I'd never seen. Somewhere out of sight beyond the splintered tree-tops of Hidden Wood, a bird had begun to sing. Without knowing why, I remembered that it was Easter Sunday. Standing in that dismal ditch, I could find no consolation in the thought that Christ was risen. I splashed back to the dug-out to call the others up for "stand-to."

There ends the book: we are given here, as always, the "reactions" of a keen mind and a

SUNDAY MORNINGS

tender heart, never preachings or posings. A second book narrating the rest of the war would be welcome ; and a third, which should be a spiritual diary (always with the material scene prominent of the post-war years which have brought our author assuagement and a deeper understanding. Meanwhile let us be grateful for these four hundred pages of unaffected confession and tribute to beauty. I cannot hope this year to see another book as good as this.

September 30, 1928.

SIR WILLIAM WATSON

THE *Selected Poems of Sir William Watson*, chosen by the poet himself, may to many be an introduction to his work. Thirty years ago Sir William was one of the most prominent figures in the literary landscape.

Lo, where upon Parnassus' slopes they romp,
The sons of Wat, of David, John and Thomp.

somebody (possibly Sir Owen Seaman) wrote in the 'nineties. But the "son of Wat," even at that remote time, was very much more seriously considered than the others. He had achieved a certain fame in the 'eighties, as a dignified disciple of Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold. It is believed that after Tennyson's death, Mr. Asquith wished to have him made Poet Laureate. His sonnets on the Armenian Massacres, in 1895, penetrated into a vast number of political households in which poetry was not commonly taken seriously. Thenceforward his vogue declined. He was knighted during the war after having written extremely enthusiastic, but not very notable, sonnets about Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Northcliffe. His later books (which have included a very uninspiring prose volume on criticism, *Pencraft*) have not attracted too much attention. Neglect has perhaps a little nettled him. He has

SUNDAY MORNINGS

the younger generation on his nerves. He writes, in 1920, an exasperated poem called "The Songsters" :—

Sing Nightingale ! There still be those who
take
Thy music to be sweet.
Chant thine old chant—till the new fashion
make
All melody obsolete.

I cannot doubt that soon the corncrake's note
Shall be to thine preferred !
What then ? Sing on—with thy still golder
note
Still tolerated bird !

In a less effervescent moment he made the same charge, coupling with it a defence of his own position :—

" Faultily faultless " may be ill—
" Carefully careless " is worse still.
I bought of late a book of rhymes—
One long, fierce flout at time and times ;
Ragged and jagged by intent,
As if each line were earthquake-rent ;
Leagues on seismic leagues of it,
Not unheroically writ,
By one of whom I had been told
That he, in scorn of canons old,
Pedantic laws effete and dead,
Went fearless to the pure well-head
Of song's most ancient legislature—

SIR WILLIAM WATSON

Art's uncorrupted mother, Nature.
Nature ! whose lapidary seas
Labour a pebble without ease,
Till they unto perfection bring
That miracle of polishing ;
Who never negligently yet
Fashioned an April violet.
Nor would forgive, did June disclose
Unceremoniously the rose. . . .
So guiltless of a fault or slip
In its victorious workmanship ;
Who suffers us pure Form to see
In a dead leaf's anatomy ;
And pondering long where greenly sleep
The unravished secrets of the deep,
Bids the all-courted pearl express
Her final thoughts on flawlessness,
But visibly aches when doomed to bring
Some inchoate amorphous thing
Into a world her curious wit
Would fain have shaped all-exquisite,
As the acorn cup's simplicity,
Or the Moon's patience with the sea,
Or the superb, the golden grief
Of each October for each leaf,
Phrased in a rhetoric that excels
Isaiah's and Ezekiel's.

Here we have Sir William's creed as an artist ;
he has obstinately argued for the pumice-stone
polish on which Catullus prided himself : Words-
worth and Théophile Gautier meet in him. As
usual, when his best is before us, we forget his
theories : art has concealed art, and we are in the
presence of the true thing perfectly said. No man

SUNDAY MORNINGS

since Landor has written better epigrams ; and his longer poems are full of fine phrases and penetrating wisdom. " The Ode in May " everybody knows, and that marvellous summary of the groping scepticism of our time which comes to a climax with " Ah, but the apparition, the dumb sign ! " " Wordsworth's Grave " and many of the shorter poems should also be in the public canon. Probably Sir William Watson, even as it is, is very much more admired by younger poets than he realises. More than he knows he is revered as one who has never prostituted his Muse and never published anything on which he had not expended the utmost pains.

But pains do not always succeed, and Sir William Watson is not always a sure critic of his own work. The garden of the Muses, in our time, has been invaded by strange raiders. Some are scientists by nature ; some are poseurs ; some are shallow fanatics with the delusion that novelty of form is the most important thing to seek, coupled with an inability to understand the importance, and the perennial foundations, of perfection of form—people who do not feel and who will not work. Yet, in so far as there may have been (as Sir William so constantly laments) a revolt against tradition, care, honesty, and sense among some intelligent young writers, it must be in part ascribed to Sir William Watson and his congeners. It is well enough to have the grand manner : it is not so well to imitate it. Sir William Watson always has his " singing robes about him." He is solemn and hieratic, and delivers his tritest

SIR WILLIAM WATSON

thought with the gravity of a man performing an immemorial rite. He writes, for example, about Thomas Hood, who made the best punning poems in the language and died with a macabre jest on his lips :—

He saw wan Woman toil with famished eyes ;
He saw her bound and strove to sing her free.
He saw her fall'n and wrote " The Bridge of Sighs."

And on it crossed to immortality.

This is occasional verse of the most ceremonial and hollow character. I do not suggest that Sir William did not mean what he said : the " propositions " involved are unexceptionable. But the whole poem resounds with the magniloquence that attempts to cover a lack of inspiration. Look at the antithesis in the second line, the anticlimax in the third line, the assumption that literary " immortality " is immortality in the fourth ; the general pomposity, which shrivels if one goes straight off and reads the Bridge of Sighs, so melodious, spontaneous and straight from the heart. Too often Sir William writes as a parodist. Not as a humorous parodist : his sense of humour is far from being his most conspicuous characteristic. He is a parodist who does not know he is parodying : all the " organ-notes " of all the most sonorous poets ring hauntingly in his ears, and he is most sonorous and most like them all when he is least powerfully moved. He does not often parody Milton, Wordsworth, or Tennyson separately : he is rather an amalgam of them all,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

writing the sort of verse that all the best poets have written.

He is a true poet, and at his best a very good one ; but his over-insistence upon tradition goes with a habit of writing, when the spirit is not blowing through him, or stirred, lines which are none the better because they remind us of the diapasons of the past. Language cannot be arrested at a Miltonic point, and a sonorous Latinism is not necessarily better than a modern English colloquialism if the latter comes more naturally to the lips. To some extent, in fact, the present movement in poetry (and not merely amongst the fools and the rebels) is a reaction against Sir William Watson himself. The work that Wordsworth did has to be done recurrently, or language will become petrified and poetry a thing removed and false. Sir William Watson would have been able to begin a sincere poem with " O Thou," and would have thought that a merely occasional piece of verse was dignified by such an opening. His juniors can't. There is always, of course, when reactions are " on," a risk of throwing out the baby with the bath. But the bath, in the present instance, was well worth discarding. Sir William Watson came as near being a purely " literary " poet as a man can safely come ; he was at his best when his heart made him forget his literature, and his literary training preserved his control over his expression. His was not, however, a good example. He did well enough himself : imitators of him must have tended to seek the purple patch, the resounding nothing, the poem

SIR WILLIAM WATSON

which relied for its effect entirely upon its reminiscences of the acknowledged great. Let him, therefore, not despair, but believe that many amongst his juniors have as much seriousness, sensitiveness, and reverence for tradition as he ; though they may not use his vocabulary and his measures. And let his juniors, frequently too prone to ignore their immediate predecessors, realise that here is a poet worth their study : at his best a consummate artist, a noble patriot, a fine moralist, and an intensely sensitive human being.

July 1, 1928.

HERBERT TRENCH

HERE, in a full collection (*The Collected Works of Herbert Trench*), and also in a selection made by himself just before his death, we have the remains of Herbert Trench. Whatever else he may have done, he wrote one of the indisputably great poems of our time ; and, however we may rank him, few who know his work would, I think, suggest that its merits, up to the present, have been overrated.

Herbert Trench was born in County Cork in 1865, and educated at Haileybury and Oxford, where he obtained an All Soul's Fellowship. His development as an author came late : he was very little under forty when his first volume of poems, *Deirdre Wedded* was published. By profession he was then, and for some years after, an inspector under the Board of Education, like Matthew Arnold before him. He left the service in 1908 to become manager of the Haymarket Theatre. His two years' regime there was notable, though (I have heard) expensive : *Lear* and *The Blue Bird* were the most remarkable of his productions. Later he retired to Florence, where, with the exception of occasional visits to England, he spent the rest of his days, being active in the foundation of the British-Italian Institute.

He died at Boulogne in June, 1923, in the enjoyment of a mitigated celebrity. Few modern

HERBERT TRENCH

authors of his distinction have been so neglected. He had a success of sorts quite early with *Apollo and the Seaman*. It was not his best production, but it had a religious reference, being written to the text :—

I heard them calling in the streets
That the ship I serve upon—
The great ship immortality—
Was gone down like the sun.

And in 1919 he was recalled to the general attention by a chorus of praise of his impressive play *Napoleon*, which was produced by the Stage Society. During most of his career the critics took very little notice of him, and the public less still. He became, I think, inured to this. He was not unconscious of his own gifts, far from it ; he was not indifferent to recognition, far from it ; but in later years, grown accustomed to the fact that other people did not see in his work what he knew to be there, he leaned heavily for support on the admiration of private friends, and seemed grateful to any publisher or editor who consented to print him. And in sober truth I have not noticed any decided inclination on the part of the public to do him better justice now that he is dead.

When this sort of thing happens, there is an explanation for it. If an artist be a recluse, or publish his works obscurely, he may well escape due notice for years. Books are numerous, and the few persons who make it their business to detect and advertise promising work in belles-

SUNDAY MORNINGS

lettres may all, accidentally, miss altogether any particular book by an unknown man, or, even if they see it, examine it so casually that they overlook its significance. But such a fate as this was not Trench's. Early in his career he attracted general interest ; he had a large personal acquaintance, and everybody knew who he was. Yet, when he died, far more people were acquainted with his name than had any familiarity with his work. The presumption was that many, both professional critics and laymen, had tried him and not liked him. The reason for this, I think, was twofold. He was very uneven in achievement, and he was often, if not in the last resort obscure, difficult at first sight. Readers who first encountered his more mediocre poems could not suppose him capable of anything as good as his best ; whilst others, faced with his difficulty, could not be sure that he would justify the pains that he called upon them to expend. That he was not inclined, even if able, to temper the wind was evident ; his attitude is summarised in an epigrammatic dialogue :—

“ Art's function is to please ”

“ But whom ? ”

“ The Few.”

“ The Few won't fill the Theatre, my good man !
That by a different function earns its due.”

“ And what may be its law ? ”

“ Please Caliban ! ”

Even here, in so short and colloquial a piece, there is one line rather clumsily worded and

HERBERT TRENCH

constructed : " That by a different function earns its due."

Conscious of his Irish birth and extraction, Trench began as a Celtic poet, and as a Celtic poet he was an odd figure. He wrote of Deirdre, Usnach and Culann, the Plain of the Dreamers and the Brake of the Black Ram, but with effort and strain. Thus early there was something rock-like in him, a rough music and a tough wrestling with ideas ; nothing tenderly melodious, softly wistful, dimly mystical : later he was impatient with the whole Celtic movement. *Deirdre Wedded* contains fine things for him who will look for them ; it also prefigures the later Trench in its plethora of hyphenated words (not always effective), the difficulty of its arguments, and its long, sprawling paragraphs which tend to oppress the verse and prevent the free flow of its music. I do not think that " black-shuddering branch " is good ; and " hide-winged fire " to me expresses nothing but strain in the poet. The imposing, and the polysyllabic novel always had a fatal attraction for Trench. He speaks in " Deirdre " of " the argentinedin of anvils " ; compare this with the " silver din " of Francis Thompson ; consider also whether even " silver " is applicable to the ring of anvils. Aiming at the majestic, which it was in his nature to seek and sometimes to achieve, he played too freely with words like " unparagoned," " perdure," and " wreckful." In one of his later poems he calls a fallen oak " Old Kronos occulted " ; in another, the fine ode on " The Battle of the Marne,"

SUNDAY MORNINGS

dreading the declivity of an ordinary phrase, he writes :—

Like a thing temporal
That dureth no long while,

which is like the worst “tushery” in William Morris’s prose. These affectations he always retained ; but after the start there was not only nothing specifically Irish about him, but no trace of Irish affinities. He wrote like an Englishman and a classic, at home with Southern English landscape, Italy, and Greece.

Trench wrote many short poems. Some of them, more simple than the rest, embodying a single thought or mood in straightforward language, are beautiful. “Come let us make Love Deathless,” has been a favourite with the anthologists ; so has “She Comes not when noon is on the Roses” (which has traces of the Irish movement). “A Charge” is a fine thing, and his eloquence was less than usual impeded by boulders of complex thought in this :—

Since I have given thee all my very heart,
Since I have staked so deep and dangerously
All that I have of hope till breath depart,
And flung my little kingdom on a die ;

Since now there streams over my land and sea
This dread Love—strange as light—beyond
recall,

I am thy prisoner ; yes, and thou art free
With but a touch to lay in ruin all.

HERBERT TRENCH

Commonly, he needed more space ; his lyrics tend to be too full, or (by reaction, perhaps) too empty. The simple *cri de cœur* was not his ; and, such was his habit of mind, any natural scene or human situation that he looked at tended to give rise to general thoughts about the history of the race and the nature of the Universe. Though anyone who should attempt to derive from him a philosophic doctrine would have to be content with very exiguous results, he certainly was a poet with the philosophic temper, trying to express the panoramic in large language. It was characteristic of him that, writing some lines as a Prelude to a Coronation Gala performance—a thing which most people would have felt called for a polite *pièce d'occasion* in couplets—he should have reached, in his third magniloquent stanza, “The Show Universal,” and in his sixth exclaimed :—

I see the Earth, outscrolled like a glittering
Map, lie here,
Her Indian snows and seas, her minarets, palms
and isles,
And Time, from his last generation, his topmost
circling Tier
Looks down on the glittering Map, and salutes
. . . and smiles.

The Playhouse itself enlarges, seems to transcend,
surpass,
Melt into the scene of the World. And shall
there be the ultimate close ?
Or wave-like shall Man, enkindled, and mirrored
from glass unto glass,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Become at length aware of an audience divine ?
Who knows ?

It must have been a little difficult for the not divine audience to follow, when it was spoken from the stage. Trench tended often to try to get the quart into the pint pot ; when he gave it a quart pot he was successful.

All over his works there are scattered fragments of grandeur, images, thoughts, and harmonies on the plane of Aeschylus and " Samson Agonistes." " Milo " (which, strangely, is not included in the *Selected Poems*) is one of the most massive and suggestive poems of our time ; he would toss off at any point phrases like

And Saturn in his moat of moons
Glassed in unsounded night.

Large of utterance, muscular, honest, he usually was ; and there were times when his proclivity, his scope, and his inspiration conspired to produce a grand result. The series of war poems, chiefly concerning France and Italy, contain some superb passages. One of the finest is that in the Marne poem, where he considers the whole nature, history, and achievement of France. " What, after all, is France ? " he exclaims with an unusual descent to the conversational :—

'Tis she who since Rome's wane
Hath been man's leader these two thousand
years.
She, always first to bear the throe

HERBERT TRENCH

Europe must after undergo,
Who beneath the centralising touch of pain
Winces into control by brain—
Her very hurts become for her an eye—
Who first among the nations seems to attain
Most near to conscious personality ;
Until her rudest sea-washt frontier-part
Is yet repeated at her heart,
And something of her wingèd whole
Glass'd upon every Pyrenean herdboy's soul.
She, who at Gergovia
Rallying the bare clans of the plaided Gael,
Alone defeated the Great Cæsar's dint ;
She, who at Alesia
Massed on her long green mountain's table head
Took for all time the noble Cæsar's print.

He was always dignified in such poems, salutes to the spirit of man and surveys of works done upon the earth ; and it was natural that his greatest achievement should have resulted from contemplation of a subject quintessential of them all. It was a fortunate moment that brought Trench the notion of standing outside human history, not in the middle of it, but at the end of it. Standing outside it all, he removed himself a little further than usual ; accustomed to think in centuries, he suddenly thought in æons ; and, visualising the end of all this labour, between the whirling, burning ball, and the cold, extinct planet of icy rock, he broke into "The Requiem of Archangels for the Death of the World." The very archangels were an inspiration in themselves ; those great compassions, those brooding wings, that timeless view. All Trench's spirit, vision, and power is summed

SUNDAY MORNINGS

up in it ; and no poem of our time is likelier to last. It begins :—

Hearts, beat no more ! Earth's Sleep has come,
All iron stands her wrinkled tree,
The streams that sang are stricken dumb,
The snowflake fades into the sea.
Hearts, throb no more ! Your time is past ;
Thousands of years for this pent field
Ye have done battle. Now at last
The flags may sink, the captains yield.
Sleep, ye great Wars, just and unjust !
Sleep takes the gate and none defends.
Soft on your craters' fire and lust,
Civilisations, Sleep descends.
Time it is, time to cease carouse.
Let the nations and their noise grow dim !
Let the lights wane within the house
And darkness cover, limb by limb !
Across your passes, Alps and plains,
A planetary vapour flows,
A last invader, and enchains
The vine, the woman, and the rose.

The level is maintained ; and, characteristically, not brooding over the calamity like a minor poet, but thinking upon it like a sage, Trench ends with the customary apostrophe that contains all his thought :—

Fount of the time-embranching fire,
O waneless One, that art the core
Of every heart's unknown desire,
Take back the hearts that beat no more !

Even here there are flaws ; that " time-em-

HERBERT TRENCH

branching" is a typical instance of Trench's awkward resonance and proneness to invent vast epithets that do not quite come off. But it is a superb poem; and had he written nothing else, no "Napoleon," no "Fables in Prose," and no other poems, it would have served to give him a place in our literature.

April 19, 1925.

BURIED TREASURE

PUNCTUALLY every morning the newspapers give us the latest despatches from the Luxor Front. Lord Carnarvon has gone back to Egypt. Mr. Howard Carter cannot yet express an opinion about the bronze candlesticks. A bunch of flowers has been discovered with traces of green on the stalks. Special stretchers have been constructed for the transport of the alabaster card tables. A vague substance in a beautifully inlaid box of ebony and ivory is believed to be paté-de-foie-gras. The Egyptian civilisation to-day is known to be even higher than we thought it yesterday: to-morrow we shall probably regard it as even higher still. Then there are the photographs: "Lord Carnarvon talking to Mr. Howard Carter," "Mr. Howard Carter chatting to Lord Carnarvon," "Stretcher-bearers bearing stretchers—note their sunburnt faces," "The Valley of the Kings from the N.S.W.—cross indicates spot where the body will, it is hoped, be found." The very British Broadcasting Company itself, an infant a few months old, must take its part; sending forth from 2LO evening chats about Tutankhamen, wafted by swift waves to the ear-caps of a hundred thousand invisible listeners. And we are all taking it in; eager, if anything, for more; hoping that Mr. Carter and Lord Carnarvon may discover something more and more re-

THE BOOK OF BURIED TREASURE

markable, beautiful, and expensive every day ; ready to hear of mounds of bullion and sacks full of gems ; prepared to hear of a third chamber within the second, and a fourth within the third ; enjoying the period of indefinite possibilities which must some day end with the announcement that the whole place has been cleared, and that there is nothing more there. A whole world, owing to modern communications, is participating day by day in a discovery of buried treasure ; when the inner door is forced, next month, millions of people will be waiting to hear the result.

And it is the shock of more rediscovered opulence that they want. Some of them may take a mild and momentary interest in the progress of the Egyptian civilisation, and even memorise for a time the numbers of some of the dynasties ; very many may have their imaginations transiently stirred by the survival of fragile or homely things across this great interval of time, such an interval as may leave of ourselves also but a few scattered mementoes with which to communicate our daily feelings and occupations to our posterity. But, beyond doubt, except to a few archaeologists—though they also have the buried treasure yearning, if for another kind of treasure—the dominant preoccupation is with the splendour and rarity of the physical objects recovered or to be recovered. The average sensual man would rather a tomb full of “ valuables ” were found than any amount of documents about dynasties, wars, and mythologies. Even a

SUNDAY MORNINGS

holograph of the Pharaoh himself, even Tutankhamen's *Things I Can Tell, or Some Notes on the Problem of the Jews* would seem to him a much less thrilling discovery than an Aladdin's cave of jewellery and furniture. The dream of buried treasure is almost universal.

No book with which I am acquainted contains more fuel for this prevalent passion than Mr. Paine's *The Book of Buried Treasure*, which was first published in 1911, and of which a new edition, containing the old misprints, has just been published. Mr. Paine's miscellany of mystery, legend, and adventure probably mentions more doubloons to the page than any work in the language, not excluding the *Lives of the Pirates*. His chief aim is to register all the principal spots in which treasure, in bulk, is known or reasonably supposed to exist, and to record, in detail, the principal attempts, successful and unsuccessful, which have been made to recover such treasure. He is not too systematic. He rushes us to and fro the centuries, with here an old print of Sir Walter Raleigh and there a photograph of a scientific gentleman working an electrically-lit hydroscope. He digresses, too, whenever he finds digression inviting. The mere fact that the unfortunate Captain Kidd was wrongly supposed to have buried vast riches in various parts of the globe is sufficient excuse for him to give a full biography of Kidd, and an argued account of his trial for piracies for which he never ought to have been committed. This is one of the most elaborate of his chapters ; another is

THE BOOK OF BURIED TREASURE

that in which he tells the heroic story of Captain Dickinson's work on the *Thetis*, which, however magnificent, was salvage work on a recent wreck of which the whole inventory was known, and which could provide nobody with a surprise. But the real thing, the real Stevenson thing, is also here in plenty.

There is a sprinkling of stories of successful searches : just enough to keep us optimistic about the puzzles not yet solved. It was on the strength of immemorial tradition alone that digging for generations went on in the Ribble valley. What was at last unearthed in 1841 was not "the greatest treasure that England had ever known, of which legend had spoken," yet some satisfaction must have been derived from "a mass of silver ornaments, armlets, neck-chains, amulets, and rings, weighing together about a thousand ounces, and more than seven thousand silver coins, mostly of King Alfred's time, all enclosed in a leaden case only three feet beneath the surface of the ground." If this be insufficient to meet the exorbitant demands of the reader, he cannot very well complain about the story of Sir William Phips. Captain Phips, in 1686, got the Duke of Albemarle and others to finance him in an expedition to Hispaniola, the coasts of which were strewn with sunken galleons, some of which he thought he could locate. He had a bad period of disappointment, and no small trouble in keeping his crew of desperadoes in order ; at last, just as he was leaving a reef which he had searched owing to a story told by an ancient Spaniard, he made his

SUNDAY MORNINGS

find. A man, staring down into clear water, saw beautiful sea weed ; a diver went down to bring it up as a souvenir and reported "that he perceived a number of great guns in the watery world where he had found the feather." It was the galleon and in a short time thirty-two tons of bar silver thickly encrusted with limestone, had been brought up, with bushels of pieces of eight, "various riches of Gold and Pearls and Jewels," and "and that a Spanish frigot was to be enriched withal. Phips reached London with three hundred thousand pounds worth, which would mean much more in modern values. He never lived to search for the richest wreck he knew of. "He knew particularly that when the ship which had Governor Bobadilla aboard was cast away, there was, as Peter Martyr says, an entire table of gold of Three Thousand Three Hundred and Ten Pounds Weight."

Bobadilla's ship, perhaps, will never more be traced. There are still plenty of known treasures which are to be recovered by somebody. The chests of the pirates, Blackbeard and Lafitte, may be something vague in nature and location. The famous Armada galleon at Tobermory is not certainly known to have been a treasure-ship at all, though she is certainly there, and at intervals during the last three hundred years, clansmen, Dukes of Argyll, and limited companies have dredged timbers and cannons, cups and coins, from the sands in which she lies. There is no doubt whatever about the wealth in the British frigate, *Lutine*, which sank off the Zuyder Zee

THE BOOK OF BURIED TREASURE

in 1799. There may have been as much as a million sterling on board of her, and in the course of a century many tens of thousands have been got out of her, bars and guineas, pistoles and louis d'or. The money in this instance is claimed by Lloyd's; there is no such reservation over the fabulous riches of the Plate Fleet which Rooke sank in Vigo Bay on October 22, 1702; twenty-eight millions is one estimate of the value of the gold and silver that went down that day. There is a sporting chance of vast plunder in Trinidad, off the Brazilian coasts, in the Salvages, and in Cocos Island, where are reputed to lie "twelve million dollars in plate, coin, bar gold, and jewels buried by buccaneers and by seamen who pirated the treasure of Lima." Drake's loot in Panama is perhaps too speculative; there is no chart. Those who insist on an exact locality, but like the maximum of mystery, will do better with Oak Island, Nova Scotia, where a shaft a hundred feet deep and more, dug by preternaturally strenuous pirates, has been cleared again and again, only to be flooded with water as the critical moment arrives. Finally, there is Eldorado. There were dozens of mythical Eldorados, but Mr. Paine assures us that the true original is Lake Guatavita, near Bogota. Into this lake, whenever they had a new chief, the local tribe used to throw a profusion of gold and jewels. It is near a mountain top, and can only be drained by a long tunnel. A tunnel was made some years since; as the water subsided the mud became as hard as cement; the dis-

SUNDAY MORNINGS

couraged adventurers stopped work.

At the end of his book Mr. Paine gives a very businesslike appendix, containing hints for the benefit of those who wish to be treasure-seekers. Here are a few consecutive extracts from his long catalogue :—

Luzon.—One of the Philippine Islands. Near Calumpit, in the swamps of the Rio Grande, the Chinese Mandarin, Chan Lee Suey, buried his incalculable wealth soon after the British captured Manila in 1762. His jewels were dazzling, and a string of pearls, bought from the Sultan of Sulu, was said to be the finest in the Orient.

Nightingale Island.—Near Tristan da Cunha. South Atlantic. One chest of pirate's silver was found here and brought to the United States, but much more is said to remain hidden.

Tobermory Bay.—Island of Mull. Western Scotland. Wreck of the galleon *Florescia*, of the Spanish Armada. Said to have contained thirty millions of treasure. Permission to investigate must be obtained from His Grace the Duke of Argyll.

Vigo Bay.—Coast of Spain. Spanish Plate fleet sunk by the English and Dutch. A trifling matter of a hundred million dollars or more are waiting for the right man to come along and fish them up. Treasure-seekers had better first consult the Spanish Government at Madrid in order to avoid misunderstandings with the local officials.

It only needed a few supplementary entries on

THE BOOK OF BURIED TREASURE

the lines of "Recommended for persons with weak lungs," and "Hotels: Carramba (expensive, bath rooms), Diavolo (good plain cooking, moderate), and Pesta (view of the sea)," to round these notes off perfectly. I hope that they may stimulate imaginative persons, with money or the power of procuring money, to enter upon the most exciting and amusing of all careers. Before the war we were hearing a good deal about treasure-hunts. People were dredging Tobermory every summer, the ingenious Signor Pino was doing great work at Vigo Bay, and almost yearly there were reports of syndicates fitting out vessels for the Spanish Main. Lately there has been a deplorable scarcity of such news. Mr. Paine and Tutankhamen between them may, let us hope, revive the industry.

January 21, 1923.

A DICTIONARY OF PIRATES

The Pirates' Who's Who, by Philip Gosse, is not a companion volume to the *Directory of Directors*, nor a blunter supplement to the *Truth Cautionary List*. It is an alphabetical dictionary of genuine sea-pirates, containing entries, mostly brief, concerning all the pirates and buccaneers whom Dr. Gosse has been able to trace. The *Who's Who* model is not precisely followed. Dr. Gosse, for example, is unable, in most instances, to give the information that appears in that valuable manual under the heading of "Educ." Some few pirates were men of known education; there were ex-officers of the Army and Navy; there was a medical doctor of Caius College, Cambridge, and there was one Henry Simms, *alias* Gentleman Harry, who was "pickpocket, highwayman, pirate and Old Etonian." After a very robust career this man was "hanged on June 17, 1747, for stealing an old silver watch and five shillings from Mr. Francis Sleep at Dunstable." The origins of most of the pirates are vaguer. Nor does Dr. Gosse employ that other familiar heading, "Recreations," though a good deal of his information might be classified under it. And another notable difference is that the majority of his entries end with some such phrase as "Hanged at Execution Dock."

For almost all the old pirates came to violent

A DICTIONARY OF PIRATES

ends, and most of them to the gallows. The precise borderlines between pirates and buccaneers, buccaneers and privateers, are not easy to draw. They were frequently crossed. Such buccaneers as Lord Cumberland and Sir Henry Morgan—whose capture of Panama is the greatest feat recorded in these pages—were respectable citizens in the eyes of their own countrymen, and their depredations, which had a political motive behind them, were entirely against the Spaniards. They could be described as privateers except for the fact that they were careless as to whether there was a state of war between England and Spain at any particular moment; they were held in honour, and frequently died in their beds. Your true pirate was the highwayman of the seas, and ships of all nations came alike to him. All nations, consequently, were against him, and even under the favourable conditions of two hundred years ago, when the oceans were so wide, and uncharted archipelagos were available for refuge, their lives were usually very short. The renown of a Blackbeard, an Avery, and a Kidd might seem to connote long careers of pillage and bloodshed. Poor Kidd was never a pirate at all, and was hanged for perfectly legal actions. Avery was only about thirty when he died penniless at Bideford, having handed the Great Mogul's diamonds over to Bristol merchants, who proved to him that there were pirates on land as well as on sea. And "Blackbeard," Captain Edward Teach, the arch-pirate of them all, was a pirate

SUNDAY MORNINGS

for but two years before the celebrated fight in which he fell with twenty-five wounds. The piratical life of Bartholomew Roberts, which lasted for three years, is one of the longest noted in these records. When the grapeshot hit Roberts's throat there fell one of the most successful of all the pirates, as well as one of the few who really had any tinge of romance.

There are plenty of points for novelists in gruesome descriptions of the pirates. Even Dr. Gosse's shortest entries often have the full Stevensonian flavour. The very name of "Captain Fly" is enough. There is Tee Wetherley, described curtly as "A Massachusetts pirate with one eye." There is Thomas Jackson, "the limping privateer," "wounded in the jaw at Tarpaulin Cove." The whole character of Dr. Wilson, Roberts's surgeon, may be built up on these sentences:—

Wilson became very intimate with Captain Roberts, and told him that if ever they were taken by one of the "Turnip-Man's ships"—*i.e.*, a man-of-war—they would blow up their ship and go to hell together. But the surgeon was such a lazy ruffian, neglecting to dress the wounded crew, that Roberts threatened to cut his ears off.

Captain Taylor, whose crew were ultimately dismissed with a bag of diamonds apiece, was "A fellow with a terrible pair of whiskers, and a wooden leg, being stuck all over with pistols." The more important pirates have fuller bio-

A DICTIONARY OF PIRATES

graphies, and these contain plenty of incidents of a full-bodied kind. "Walking the plank" was apparently almost an unknown institution. Only Major Bonnet is known to have executed his prisoners thus. Bonnet, a wealthy retired officer, settled in Barbadoes, took to piracy because his wife nagged him; he had several profitable cruises before he was captured and hanged at Charleston. His crew were all buried in the marshes below high-water mark. Captain Daniel, a bloodthirsty Frenchman, shot one of his men through the head for disrespect during Divine Service. The worst excesses of L'Ollonais were those of a lunatic; it was Blackbeard who came nearest to the Bold Bad Pirate of fiction. He would let off pistols occasionally amongst his friends because "if he did not shoot one or two of them now and then, they'd forget who he was." He was a huge man with a long black beard growing from below his eyes, which he plaited into many tails, each one tied with a coloured ribbon and turned back over his ears. He carried three pairs of pistols in action, and stuck matches under the brim of his hat. The two surviving entries of his log run:—

1718. Rum all out.—Our company somewhat sober.—A damn'd Confusion amongst us.—Rogues a-plotting—great talk of separation—so I look'd sharp for a Prize.

1718. Took one, with a great deal of Liquor on Board, so kept the Company hot; damned hot, then all Things went well again.

The careers of the famous female pirates, Anne

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Bonny and Mary Read, are sufficiently racy, but the most agreeable story in this book is that of Woodes Rogers' amusements in Brazil after his first hostile reception. He was a privateer, not a pirate, but the story was well worth telling. He entertained forty local priests to drink and sang on board his ship; the priests spent the night. "They were very merry, and in the cups propos'd the Pope's health to us. But we were quits with 'em by toasting the Archbishop of Canterbury; and to keep up the humour we also proposed William Pen's health, and they liked the liquor so much that they refused neither." I could have done with a few more of such detailed stories than Dr. Gosse has given us. Many of his entries, useful enough no doubt to the future students of piratology, are too bare to be interesting.

Picturesqueness without glamour is the characteristic of most of the pirates whose lives are known in any detail. They drank and sang and swore; they flew the Jolly Roger; they dipped their hands, often enough, in chests of jewels and pieces of eight. But few of them had the redeeming features that fiction-writers frequently ascribe to them. As a whole they were, like the highwaymen, a disgusting lot of men; murderers whose drunkenness and incompetence gave them a very short run. There are exceptions in point both of inhumanity and lack of success. A few calculating freebooters abandoned their calling at the right moment and flourished ashore. The most wholesale murderer of them all became a

A DICTIONARY OF PIRATES

Mohammedan, and died at Constantinople a millionaire and a Bashaw. Captain Nathaniel North, originally a Bermuda lawyer, was one of those who settled in Madagascar among the natives, though a native ultimately murdered him in his bed. Captain Joseph Thwaites, at one time a midshipman, and a ferocious murderer who killed children and drowned all his prisoners "by tying a double-headed shot round their necks and throwing them overboard," had agents in Gibraltar through whom he used to transmit large sums to his wife and family in England. He went to the United States and purchased a fine estate, ultimately dying through the bite of a rattlesnake. Captain Cobham (whose wife, who accompanied him to sea, would kill prisoners for pistol practice) purchased an estate from the Duc de Chartres and died, an aged magistrate, near Havre.

These, alas, were seldom of the more chivalrous kind. Chivalry, of a kind, did just exist. Roberts, who like an immense number of the pirates, was of Welsh birth, was the Claude Duval of the sea. He dressed in rich damask, with a red-plumed hat, and a gold chain, with diamond cross, round his neck. He never allowed his women prisoners to be molested; he was a total abstainer; he had all lights out at eight; gambling on his ship was forbidden; he was a strict Sabbatarian; and he forced no man to become a pirate against his wish. He took over four hundred vessels. With one he captured a clergyman whom he begged to remain as ship's

SUNDAY MORNINGS

chaplain. It was hard luck on him that he died, because his crew were drunk. But Roberts's light pales before that of Captain Misson, a Frenchman who might well be known as the Saintly Pirate. He and a young Dominican priest converted a ship's crew to a belief in liberty and a disbelief in private property. They resolved to be virtuous pirates. When the question of what flag they should sail under was debated, the innocent boatswain suggested the black flag. This led to a tumultuous tirade from Misson, who said they were to be men of principle, "and therefore, instead of a black flag, they should live under a white ensign, with the motto, 'For God and Liberty' embroidered on it." The first prize Misson captured was an English sloop, from which he took rum and such articles as he needed, then letting the ship go scot-free. This so surprised the British captain that he made his crew man ship and give the good pirate three rousing cheers. Misson allowed no swearing; he liberated slaves, and dressed them in the clothes of their masters, and he hated killing anybody. When he took an English vessel with £60,000 the capture was spoiled for him by the death of the English captain, whom he buried under a stone monument inscribed, "Here lies a gallant Englishman." In the end he retired and founded a Utopian colony in Madagascar, where he flourished for many years. "Piracy without tears," Dr. Gosse calls this; and certainly Misson came as near as man may to the reconciliation of opposites.

If this book sends readers to the entertaining

A DICTIONARY OF PIRATES

works of Johnson and Esquemeling (which latter has just been republished by Messrs. Routledge), I imagine that Dr. Gosse's chief object will have been secured. Or perhaps his chief object was to amuse himself, which end it is easy to see he has achieved.

April 6, 1924.

THE SMUGGLERS

The Smugglers, by Lord Teignmouth and Charles G. Harper, is a large and compendious work. Lord Teignmouth produced a book on smugglers in 1892; he has been in the Coastguard Service, and is an accomplished draughtsman, with a particular penchant for old cottages and inns with historic associations. Mr. Harper produced a book on smugglers in 1909; he is a gossip, well known as a voluminous chronicler of the English roads. He also draws, and especially favours, cottages and inns with dormers and uneven roofs. The streams of their learning, garrulity, and artistic talent have drawn to a confluence. The Blue Nile has joined the White, and the waters of the mighty resultant are still further swollen by the accession of Mr. Paul Hardy, who contributes vigorous pictures in which swarthy ruffians with bandanas and pistols fight with the King's officers or land fat kegs on lonely beaches at dead of night. His presence, one may not unkindly suppose, is due to the fact that the amateur draughtsman is notoriously more at home with cottages and trees than with the human face and the human form in action.

If the book is rather large for the ordinary reader and details too many stories with a strong resemblance to each other, the authors would no doubt reply that they wished to compile a work

THE SMUGGLERS

of reference as well as one of entertainment. Lord Teignmouth had access to many Admiralty papers which have recently been destroyed and of which the record here is the only one that survives. In other ways great pains have been taken to obtain original material. Many of the spots mentioned have been visited and, just before it was too late, the authors established personal contact with survivors of the old Kent gangs of a hundred years ago. The arrangement in places might have been improved from the chronological point of view, and a certain amount of journalese might have been squeezed out of the writing. The reader whose territorial interests lie elsewhere may reasonably regret that so great a share of attention is given to the smugglers of Kent and Sussex. Doubtless these were the chief centres of smuggling and smuggling affrays; information also is no doubt more easy to obtain regarding them. But the West Country smugglers deserve more attention than they get, and more search there might have produced stories worth having. However, the interest of these two volumes is well sustained; they have an air of accuracy and common sense; and they must become the principal resort of everybody who wants to learn about the history of smuggling.

Smuggling came into being with taxes on the movements of goods; organised smuggling has always co-existed with taxes so high as to make the money return commensurate with the risks undertaken. Capital and labour, here as elsewhere, flow in the direction of the largest profits.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Other factors which govern the amount and direction of enterprise are the relative obtuseness of commodities (illicit distilling became easier when the tax was taken off malt, and the distiller no longer need betray himself by the strong smell of malting), the efficiency of the preventive service, and the extent to which the community at large condones smuggling. In the old days the difficulties of the authorities—already sufficiently great owing to the loneliness of the coasts, the extent of coastwise marshes and moors, and the absence of rapid communications of man or message—were much increased owing to the fact that virtually the whole population of the southern counties were accomplices of the smugglers. "Brandy for the parson, 'baccy for the clerk, laces for a lady," runs the catalogue in Mr. Kipling's spirited song. Everybody wanted the highly taxed goods, and few could afford to pay for them unless they were run in duty free. Nobody thought brandy-drinking wicked; everybody thought that the Government acted tyrannically in over-taxing it; clergymen, magistrates, attorneys took their share of the contraband; even to-day Englishmen who would scorn to defraud the customs directly would not shrink from getting good cigars cheap which somebody else had smuggled. If smuggling to-day is less prevalent, it is partly because the risks of detection are much greater. Spirits may be dear, but a band of three hundred men could scarcely assemble once a month to land and distribute a shipload without being caught. The things which

THE SMUGGLERS

are now most profitable and easy to smuggle are the very valuable and portable commodities saccharine and cocaine. Saccharine in bulk is no use to the private consumer ; cocaine happens to be a thing which all except a small minority of the population regard as a terrible poison, dealers in which should be ruthlessly punished. Communications and the strength of Government have been enormously improved. Let us assume that the improvement about balances the relative ease of concealing cocaine as against brandy, value for value. Some notion of what things were like in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries may be formed if we suppose the whole present population to be eagerly desirous of obtaining cocaine, and consequently well disposed towards persons who would obtain it for them at a possible price. How could any Government stop it from coming in in large quantities ? A few pocketfuls would keep a man in affluence for a year. If thousands of people, instead of a few stupid German sailors and a few Chinamen, already marked down because of their colour, were using all their ingenuity and all their knowledge and influence to land it, no power on earth could intercept more than a small percentage of the illicit goods. Happily the demand for cocaine is small and the number of possible accomplices in the cocaine traffic is small ; otherwise we should not congratulate ourselves as we do on the great decrease in smuggling.

The first smugglers in England smuggled goods out and not in. Our medieval kings, anxious

SUNDAY MORNINGS

to promote the domestic woollen manufacture, occasionally prohibited and usually taxed the export of wool. Foreign wool manufacturers had to get our wool to keep going; the result was that bales used at night to be put aboard the luggers as, at a later date, kegs were taken off them. The wool-smugglers were known as "owlers," and their exports went on for centuries. Under William III a law was enacted that no person living within fifteen miles of the sea in the counties of Kent and Sussex should buy any wool unless he swore that he would not sell to any person within fifteen miles of the sea. This was of no more use than the previous laws; in Romney Marsh, in 1699, there were 160,000 sheep, almost all of whose fleeces were destined for France. Fifty preventive officers patrolling two hundred miles of coast could not do much, and there is significance in the order (about 1720) that a regiment of soldiers must have £200 for new shoes and stockings, their previous equipment "having been worn out in the pursuit of smugglers." Meanwhile silk and spirits were coming in. It is interesting to note that Edward I, in return for certain maritime services, gave the Cinque Ports, and certain limbs of them in East Anglia, immunity from customs dues, and that to the end the "free traders" of those parts clung to the tradition that in smuggling drink especially they were merely exercising a traditional right which had been filched from them by unjust governments. Other commodities were, until a late date, smuggled in and out of

THE SMUGGLERS

Kent and Sussex. Silks came in ; guineas, during the Napoleonic wars, went out, Napoleon largely financing his campaigns with English gold. But brandy was, in later years, the staple, partly because everybody wanted it, and partly because the smugglers themselves wanted it badly. They were, mostly, a drunken lot, and sold what they did not drink in order to pay for what they did. The one line in Mr. Kipling's poem which is not verisimilitudinous is " Watch the wall, my darling, while the gentlemen go by." The smugglers of Kent and Sussex were, as a rule, no gentlemen in any sense of the word, in spite of their ponies, their cocked hats, and the pistols in their holsters. Most highwaymen, in spite of the romance about Claude Duval, were low creatures. Most pirates, in spite of the boys' books, were dirty, drunken, treacherous, blood-thirsty, and short-lived ruffians ; and the smugglers were for the most part the lazy, cruel loafers of the countryside.

The ordinary peasant of the time occasionally turned out as a bodyguard ; he got a few shillings and some brandy for a night's job. But the professional smugglers who got most of the loot and carried the arms showed themselves, whenever their doings came to the light, as brutal and treacherous. The population would not betray them, but they betrayed each other ; they were wanton in their murders of the King's men ; and the chief stories about them, conspicuous amongst which are the disgusting murders of Chater and Galley, are stories of cruel badgerings and killings

SUNDAY MORNINGS

of defenceless men. Here and there one encounters a figure around which clings some romance. The famous Thomas Johnson is one of them. He was born in 1772 and died in 1839, and he alternated the profession of smuggler with that of pilot. He twice escaped from prison; he refused to help Napoleon (who captured him) with his invasion scheme; he was with St. Vincent off Brest, and piloted the expedition to Walcheren; he behaved himself so gallantly at Walcheren that he was given a pension; and it was only Napoleon's death that prevented him from earning £40,000, and more if he was successful, in an attempt to rescue the ex-Emperor from St. Helena. Another was George Ransley, an organiser of genius, who regularly paid a large army of smugglers, and when transported to Van Diemen's Land became rich, popular, and esteemed. Most of them, however, were the sort of rough brutes who were not above robbing reapers, and drank and blasphemed their way to the scaffold without thinking of the morrow. The harsh laws, no doubt, made them worse than they might have been; they felt that they might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb; but it is impossible to feel sympathy for persons who bury Excise officers alive, up to the head, below high-water mark, and leave them there to drown, and pull sick women out of bed in order to find out where farmers keep their hoards.

The extent to which smuggling went on for hundreds of years may be indicated by one figure in 1733, 54,000 lbs. of tea and 123,000 gallons of

THE SMUGGLERS

brandy were seized, and still smuggling paid. Ultimately, with the establishment of the coast-guard, the improvement of roads, the invention of telegraphs, and the growth of civic sentiment and respectability, the old type of smuggler died out ; but our authors give a good many stories of late nineteenth-century smuggling which illustrate the ingenuity of individuals. The best is that of the merchant who got a vast consignment of gloves divided into two portions, one of right-hand gloves, one of left-hand ; had them sent to different ports ; refused them at landing ; went to the Government auctions and bought these useless halves for a song ; and made a handsome profit. It is a far cry to this from the old-time atmosphere of the Hunstanton epitaph :—

In Memory of William Webb, late of the
15th Lt D'ns, who was shot from his Horse by
a party of Smugglers on the 26th of Sepr. 1784.

I am not dead, but sleepeth here,
And when the Trumpet Sound I will appear.
Four balls thro' me Pearced there way.
Hard it was. I'd no time to pray.
This stone that here you Do see
My Comerades erected for the sake of me.

The modern smuggler is furtive and cunning ; no conflicts with troops for him. How far he exists, even, we do not know ; we no longer talk of " well-known smugglers " as they used in every Kentish village in 1820. According to our authors, there is, owing to the heavy duties on

SUNDAY MORNINGS

spirits, at present a good deal of "running c goods across Channel by fast motor boats into the remote shores and creeks of the South and East Coasts." I do not know. But it is evident that we cannot compete with Florida and the Bahamas, where at present flourishes a population of smugglers more opulent than any in smuggling history and as ready to shed blood as any.

August 24, 1924.

THE INN

The Book of the Inn, selected and edited by Thomas Burke, one of the prettiest and cheapest little books I have recently seen, is an anthology of references in English literature to English inns. Mr. Burke is of the opinion expressed by Dr. Johnson at Chapel House, "where he expatiated on the felicity of England in its inns and taverns," saying, "No, Sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn," then repeating, with great emotion, "Shenstone's lines." Shenstone's lines, the celebrated stanzas in which the poet said he had always found his "warmest welcome in an inn," are naturally to be found within Mr. Burke's covers. Any anthologist would have thought of that. The erudition and labour which Mr. Burke has brought to the service of his collection (which has a preface worthy of it) is better attested by saying that I made a long list of familiar and outlandish references to inns before looking at the index, and that when I looked they were all there.

All, that is to say, except the modern ones. Mr. Burke gives us Chaucer and Shakespeare, Jonson and Pepys, Fielding, Smollett, and great draughts of Washington Irving and Dickens. He does not forget Cobbett and Borrow; he has several curious pieces from the sixteenth and

SUNDAY MORNINGS

seventeenth century ; and he who looks here (as I did) for the travels of Carl Moritz and "The Tunnyng of Eleanor Rummyng" will find them. The presence of this last, we may note, a squalid masterpiece which does for the bad kind of Tudor ale-house what Hogarth did for "Gin Lane," illustrates Mr. Burke's catholicity. He does not look only for pæans. Rude as well as polite landlords are here, dirty tablecloths as well as clean ; and if the "tributes" are in the majority, it is notorious that we have always had the finest inns, as we have had the finest roads and parish churches, in the world. I repeat that all the best things are here, from Christian seeking lodging and Izaak Walton playing shovel-board to Tom Brown having his first glass of stout on the way to school. But a few pages might well have been spared for those writers, since Trollope, whom Mr. Burke deliberately omits : several living writers, and, above all, Edward Thomas.

It is a gallery of homely and pleasant interiors. The inn, across the ages, has changed less than most things : which gives a peculiar poignancy to these pictures of enjoyment long past, and men, generations dead, delighting in the familiar lighted windows, broad courtyards, gleaming tankards, "buxom" landladies, gables, leaded windows, sanded floors, social talk, and snug beds. Very narrowly, however, was the last transition made. Macaulay in the mid-century, declared that the day for good inns was past. In one of those sweeping antithetical generalisations of which he was so fond, he remarked that "the inns will be

THE INN

best when the means of locomotion are worst " :—

The quicker the rate of travelling, the less important is it that there should be numerous agreeable resting places for the traveller. . . . At present we fly from York or Exeter to London by the light of a single winter's day. At present, therefore, a traveller seldom interrupts his journey merely for the sake of rest and refreshment. The consequence is that hundreds of excellent inns have fallen into great decay. In a short time no good houses of that description will be found, except at places where strangers are likely to be detained by business or pleasure.

An improvement, which he could hardly foresee, in " the means of locomotion " has brought people swarming back to the roads. The motor-car has enabled new hosts to travel for pleasure on the old roads : and the old inns have been brought back to life just when they seemed about to expire. Years before Macaulay and the railway, the decaying inn was a known phenomenon. Crabbe wrote a long description of one, beginning :—

Large the domain, but all within combine
To correspond with the dishonour'd sign ;
And all around dilapidates ; you call—
But none replies—they're inattentive all ;
At length a ruin'd stable holds your steed,
While you through large and dirty rooms
 proceed,
Spacious and cold ; a proof they once had been
In honour—now magnificently mean ;

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Till in some small, half-furnished room you rest
Whose dying fires denotes it had a guest.

In those you pass'd where former splendour
reigned,

You saw the carpets torn, the paper stain'd ;
Squares of discordant glass in windows fix'd,
And paper oil'd in many a space betwixt ;
A soil'd and broken sconce, a mirror crack'd,
With table underpropp'd, and chairs new-
back'd ;

A marble side-slab with ten thousand stains,
And all an ancient tavern's poor remains.

With much entreaty, they your food prepare,
And acid wine afford, with meagre fare.

It is as well to be reminded that acid wine is no invention of our own times ; and Mat Prior attests to addled eggs and rank bacon in the days of Queen Anne. But, just before the motor-car arrived, a general decay, accompanied by mental hopelessness, was visible in all that middle kind of ancient inn between the village ale-house, which seldom expected travellers, and the prosperous hostelries of busy market towns.

They are more active now than they have ever been before, and many that had faded and lapsed into half-ruin have recovered their ancient brightness and comfort. They have even become self-conscious about that antiquity which inspired the writers of the early nineteenth century to so many pages of vivid and affectionate prose. The awareness and pride is well enough when it leads to the careful preservation of an ancient fabric and traditional ways, not to mention the best old

THE INN

traditions of cooking and courtesy. But it can be carried too far, and there is too much impudent exploitation of the antique by the ignorant for the ignorant. An unobtrusive date does no harm if it be placed as it might have been placed originally. But bogus dates are frequently employed; medieval dates are stuck upon vile gin-palaces which ought to be ashamed of reminding one that better things than themselves existed. Dates are steadily receding, and I live in hopes that the tavern at Avebury, all compact of Druidical stones, may end the fevered competition by putting up "Dated B.C. 1500," which would settle it. The date of a building is interesting, but the dates of the wine and the cheese are also important. And the pots and pans, the pewter, brass, and copper, the hunting horns and ship-pictures, the oak chests and sideboards! How agreeable they are when they have always been there, or have been collected at haphazard by landlords who have fancied them. And how repulsive they are when they have obviously been bought wholesale to "Give character" to a place that was previously full of character, and only succeed in making us feel that we are not in the Saracen's Head at Chippingchester, but in some newly-opened Olde Antique Shoppe. The man is doubtless blest who makes two blades of grass grow where none grew before. Not so the man who makes two "Ye's" grow where one, or none, grew before.

One other menace to the inns remains. I mean the brewers. One result, little observed, of the

SUNDAY MORNINGS

concentration of many licences in few hands is that a licence is simply treated as a licence, and a more profitable one as better than a less profitable one. The result in the towns—an unintended result of a system which usually demands the surrender of an old licence if a new one is asked for—is that the quieter, older, more outlying, soberer inns are continually closing their doors in favour of more crowded, blatant, and malodorous taverns which do more trade.

Here, perhaps, I am impinging upon the very difficult problems of the licensing laws. The matter of inn signs is simpler. For many years brewers have been smothering the fronts of village inns with their great placards. A visitor to the Bath neighbourhood might suppose most of the inns there to be called, not the "Four Feathers" or "The Bear," but "George's Bristol Beers," and half the inns in Essex very conspicuously announce the uneuphonious and (to me) unpalatable name of "Shrimp Beers." What leads them to do this it is difficult to make out. The breweries are not, as a rule, for sale, and the visitor very well knows he will have no choice of beer. Of late, owing perhaps to an increasing interest in inn-signs—always one of the prides of our roads—some brewers have begun to abandon this kind of useless publicity in favour of refurbished signs. But instead of giving us signs like the old ones, gules with lions and azure with boars, they divide the signboard laterally into two colours, always the same for any one brewery, and dully write the name of the inn, or even the name

THE INN

of the Ales, across it. To see thirty Friary signs in an hour, all exactly the same, is worse than seeing none at all : the point about a sign and a name is its individuality, and a good enough sign will certainly be as likely to make a motorist stop as any date—whilst the local resident is unaffected anyhow. Besides, wouldn't it pay to pretend that these inns have more individuality than they actually have? I commend a reconsideration of signs to the more enlightened of our brewers.

MEDIEVAL TAVERNS

The Inns of the Middle Ages by W. C. Firebaugh, is not a scholar's book ; not the sort of comprehensive, fully documented and annotated, volume that we are accustomed to receive from such students as Mr. Coulton and Miss Power. It is a rambling miscellany by a man who has evidently done much " fine, confused feeding " in libraries, who has a gusto for Chaucerian and Falstaffian life, and a passion for good liquor that he is no longer able to gratify. Not that his constitution forbids it ; he still hopes for happier days. But he is an American, and his nostalgia for his lost paradise is as powerful as the Israelites' longing for the fleshpots and the Miner's Dream of Home. He finds a kind of comfort, it appears, in a fond brooding over those delights which he is no longer able to enjoy directly. It is a consolation to him to reflect on the vast number of inns there have been in the world. There were strong drinks before Agamemnon. Mr. Firebaugh has already written a volume on *The Inns of Greece and Rome*, and another on the *Satyricon of Petronius*, in which inns figure considerably. He has now moved on to the Middle Ages ; and he still has the inns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe, not to mention those of America in all ages, left as virgin pastures for his imagination. He is a gossip, with a gift for quotation ; and the

MEDIEVAL TAVERNS

flow of his odd anecdotes and historical fragments is only now and then interrupted by an incursion of the author, fanned to a new flame of indignation by the thought of what has happened to his own country. He maintains that the tavern will never be abolished

until human nature itself has passed through a crucible which will refine it of all dregs, kill its sense of humour, and populate the civilised globe with a race of beings no less self-righteous than any Pharisee or Roundhead, no less constant to its own self-love than any zealot of the litter.

"Who are we," he cries, "to make odious and carping comparisons between our own arid era of spigot-bigotry, bootlegger-domain, scoff-outlawry and synthetic gin, and those more primitive and direct ages of the Merovingian dynasty?"

I am uncertain as to the meaning of "scoff-outlawry," but Mr. Firebaugh's general attitude is clear. I cannot help thinking, however, that if his volume is meant to be in any degree propagandist, he did not choose his instances very well. I happen myself, like Shenstone, to have spent many of my happiest hours in an inn. I agree with Dr. Johnson that there is no throne comparable to a tavern chair; and I am prepared to believe, with Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, that a race without liquor would be a race without literature. Nevertheless, I cannot honestly say that the picture that Mr. Firebaugh draws of the inns of the Middle Ages is a seductive one, and I

SUNDAY MORNINGS

rather fear that the people whom he calls "spigot-bigots" may use his volume to point their own morals.

For the picture he presents is one of almost unmitigated squalor and vice. Of the earlier inns he has little to say. He can observe that the Saxons, though they had ale-houses, had few inns, because of their hospitality to travellers; and he quotes from one of the plays of the nun Hroswitha a passage showing a tavern in a thoroughly unsavoury light. From the twelfth century onwards he has much more material, about both the ale-houses and the hostelrys, but few of his stories are at all agreeable. We meet crowd after crowd of drunkards, prodigals, gamesters, debauchees, robbers, murderers, and the like; inns full of plundering wenches, the abode where Villon wallowed with Margot, the house where Eleanor Rummyng made ale and the neighbours pawned their shoes and stockings to drink their fill of it, a house (like its proprietor) which is delightful to read about in Skelton, but which would have been nauseating to visit. The suggestion is gradually conveyed that the inns were all like this and their "frequenters" also. But it stands to reason that they were not.

Then as now both legislators and authors were naturally more concerned with the abnormal than the normal. When, suddenly, Mr. Firebaugh begins quoting Chaucer or Froissart, the scene completely changes. Chaucer's Tabard, whose landlord was possibly an M.P., and whose parlour it was not unseemly for a Prioress to visit, was

MEDIEVAL TAVERNS

obviously a good and a respectable inn ; scattered about England there are still in use a few medieval inns, noble and beautiful houses, which attest another kind of tavern life than that which Mr. Firebaugh chiefly exhibits. Respectable citizens used taverns as clubs, wealthy merchants stayed in them on their travels, which they certainly would not have done had the inevitable consequences been a robbing or a beating. Froissart's description of the inns which the miscreant Le Mengeant visited disguised as an abbot, and which he himself stayed at in Southern France, is certainly a description of agreeable inns. Take this :—

And we soon after entered Tarbes, where we were very comfortable at the hotel of the Star. We remained there the whole of that day, for it was a commodious place to refresh ourselves and horses, having good hay, good oats, and a handsome river.

There was the " Angel " at Montpellier ; and the " Moon " at Orthes " kept by a squire of the count, who received me with much pleasure on account of my being a Frenchman." The " count " was the gallant Count de Foix who himself died in a pleasant village inn. Had Mr. Firebaugh found more of such narratives his book would have been less lop-sided. And especially does one observe a paucity of references to this country, which, in the Middle Ages, was notorious for the excellence of its inns, roads, and parish churches. It is rash to mix up facts from half-a-

SUNDAY MORNINGS

dozen countries and generalise from them.

Mr. Firebaugh might have read his proofs better ; mistakes in spelling are numerous. His style, too, may be a little tumid for some tastes. He refers, for instance, to a cheating gamester's dice as "his spotted allies" ; a phrase, I admit, which is followed by an excellent description of another gambler "whose technique enabled him to correct the errors of chance." The verse translations he gives are not always good ; he quotes a version of "*Mihi est propositum in taberna mori*," which is greatly inferior to Leigh Hunt's. His temper, too, is occasionally a little irritating : he is so resolved to differ from the Puritans that he is prepared to condone everything that they dislike. Nevertheless, in an age of discretion and uniformity, one should welcome an eccentric who rides his Hobby-horse. Mr. Firebaugh is not in the least bothered with system. He roves from country to country, from Odoacer to Montaigne. He quotes royal and papal decrees, chronicles and fabliaux, Poggio and Des Periers. He lingers on Villon for several pages ; quotes at great length when he finds anything worth quoting ; is always more pre-occupied with the amusing thing than with giving a just proportion to his picture. Whenever he feels inclined he roams beyond his period. Cœur-de-Lion's disguise as a turnspit gives him a chance of narrating Condé's inglorious career as groom and cook ; he has a word on the Mermaid ; he quotes Montaigne as saying that there was more meat to be got from "the clacking gossip of the

MEDIEVAL TAVERNS

herring woman " than from public disputations, and that " I had rather my son learned his speech in the taverns than in those schools of windy oratory." He has a digression on pardoners, one of whom, in a medieval farce, is accredited with hawking a feather of one of the seraphs, the pebble with which David slew Goliath, a piece of Noah's Ark, and the comb of the cock that crowed when Pilate gave sentence. He gives a long account of the disreputable wandering students who, according to a twelfth century monk, " in Paris seek liberal arts, in Orleans authors, at Salerno gallipots, at Toledo demons, and in no place decent manners," Here we come across a decree of Edward I ordering all the public-houses to close at curfew ; here one of Cassiodorus forbidding inn-keepers to have one price for natives and another for travellers ; here an account of the miraculous cruse of wine which " the sainted Remy had blessed, and bestowed, upon Clovis the King," a bottle that never ran dry unless its contents were offered for sale. His hotch-potch will be liked very much by those who like it at all.

April 12, 1925.

THE ENGLISH INN

THE pleasure which *The English Inn, Past and Present*, by A. E. Richardson, F.S.A., and H. Donaldson Eberlein, B.A., has afforded me I can only indicate by saying that I have few books that I would not sooner part with than this, which has just come to my hand. The pictures alone would make it a treasure: the information given adds to one's gratitude. The pictures are really superb: hundreds of them, prints and photographs. Here are "The Feathers," at Ludlow; "The Angel," at Grantham; "The Pilgrim's Inn," at Glastonbury, built by the Abbot in 1470, still intact, with its glorious, ornate stone front and coloured heraldic shields. Naturally one knows great inns that are not mentioned. But there are others as beautiful, of which one has never heard: inns of all periods, from tumble-down Gothic structures to handsome Regency edifices which give innkeeping an air of officialdom: arches, courtyards, elaborate timber fronts, ingle-nooks, pillared porticoes: stone, flat brick, nineteenth-century plaster: the inns of Chaucer, of Shakespeare, of Dryden, of Johnson, of Nelson, and of Lord Palmerston. Beautiful signs are reproduced, and beautiful ironwork suspending the signs. In the text, the social history which the inns crystallise is recorded: the very names of inns, which often go by localities, "Bear," "White

THE ENGLISH INN

Hart," and "Talbot," embody vanished traditions and customs. And there is a great deal of information about particular houses : including one which has been praised by Miss Austen, Fanny Burney, and Mr. Belloc, which last I should regard as perhaps the best authority of the three. Inns in dramatic and other literature are discussed; the peculiar customs of certain inns (notably those at Highgate) are registered ; much light is thrown on vanished London (though too little on the existing City taverns) ; and the architectural comment everywhere is extremely sensible.

I said that not all one's favourite inns were mentioned or depicted in this book. I should hate the book if they were : for I should have the feeling that everything had been registered, and discovery made impossible. From their chapters on the larger inns, even beautiful and famous Thames-side houses are missing. Their disquisition on public-house signs and titles makes no mention of my own favourite, the "Live-and-Let-Live" that I found on a hill in Somerset. And, of course, they have very little space for the innumerable (though I suppose the Blue Books number them) small inns scattered over every county, the inns that one encounters on a side-road and footpath walking tour. It is a pleasure to find pictures of the inn at the ferry at Horning and the lovely thatch and whitewash "Cat and Fiddle" at Hinton Admiral. But there are hundreds of others that they do not know and cannot know. Not in a lifetime could a man come to all the country inns of England, the

SUNDAY MORNINGS

lonely houses on moor and dale, the quiet inns at cross-roads where one may talk half-an-hour with the landlord before the next drover arrives, the riverside inns, where bream and pike brown in their glass cases, and the pewter shimmers softly from the shelves, the slate-fronted hotels of the small Devonshire towns, the half-timbered inns of Sussex, the crumbling stone inns of the Cotswold country—which might well have been more fully represented in this book, though the “Lygon” at Broadway is a magnificent example. Our authors have covered a tremendous amount of ground; but they have been unable to devote space to such celebrated inns as the “Maid’s Head” at Norwich, the “Spread Eagle” at Thame, and the “Swan” at Fittleworth. Judge, then, how they must fringe the subject of the smaller houses, the village inns, those places to which, afoot or by car, we come with the feeling that no stranger has ever been before, and with the certainty that the civil, quiet, and thirsty labourers will discuss the odd “foreigners” as soon as we have gone. Wherever you go in England, down the muddiest side road, over the loneliest down, you will always come in the end to a church and an inn; a church with memorials of centuries of history, possibly enshrining unique “features” of architecture and an exquisite tomb, and an inn where, in their leisure hours, sit and cogitate the living descendants of the long generations of dead who sleep under the churchyard grass. Never will any traveller see them all, nor any book contain them all.

THE ENGLISH INN

Architecturally, the wealth that the inn has given us has been enormous. In the vast majority of small towns and villages the inns rank next after the churches for beauty and antiquity, and they present an even greater variety of charm. Aesthetically they are the buttresses and corner-stones of our most beautiful streets, by virtue of their size, their façades, their coloured signs; socially they are the second centre of communal life. There was a time when the country inn and the country "hotel" were seriously threatened, particularly the larger and finer houses on main roads; they did not live principally on the sale of liquor to "local residents," but on the "accommodation for man and beast" arriving by road and departing by road. The coming of the railways brought a sudden impoverishment which killed many inns, and brought others to decay. The authors of this book quote a vivid and delightful letter written in 1844 by Miss Margaret St. Aubyn to her cousin Kathleen in Chippenham. "You will see," she begins:

that I have arrived in town, after an adventurous journey by road. My state of mind would not permit me to travel by rail, for Mr. Brunel is no hero of mine, since he has destroyed posting, put down coaches, and compelled people to sit behind his puffing monsters.

She and "Belinda" had dared the perils of the half-deserted roads and arrived in Berkeley-square in a mud-stained barouche to the amazement of all beholders. She lamented over the

SUNDAY MORNINGS

departed glory of the inns at which they called and ended with anathemas against "Brunel, Stephenson, and Hudson, the railroad kings." For two generations the posting-houses languished; then came the motor-car which saved them. Miss St. Aubyn would most certainly have welcomed this. She was an independent lady and travelling by rail is a gross servitude. It is bad enough to be shackled to one constant train, to be (as the Limerick puts it) "not a 'bus, but a tram"; it is worse still to have one's supply of fresh air dictated by strangers, and the precise number and durations of one's stops dictated by a company which is seeking the average convenience of the greatest number, which means nobody's convenience at all. The immortal road has revived, and the ancient inns with it. The destruction of country inns has been arrested; in many instances recent years have seen much-needed repairs and restoration carried out. It is in the large cities that these, like other ancient monuments, are still disappearing. It is a significant fact that when the authors want typical pictures of country inns, whether medieval, Elizabethan, or Georgian, they supply us with photographs; but the ancient hostleries of London have mostly to be shown in old prints and drawings. A fragment is here, and a delicious fragment, of the "George" at Southwark (a luncheon at which should always be the sequel to a visit to that interesting Cathedral Church which the ogre Henry VIII first confiscated and then sold back to the parishioners), but where are the other great London inns, with

THE ENGLISH INN

their characteristic rows of galleries over the courtyards? The "Bell" in Holborn lingered until 1894; most of the others had gone before that under the pressure of commercial necessity and the rise in land values. This cannot be helped, though it may be lamented.

It has not, I think, been noticed that there is another cause quite accidentally operating towards the diminution of the most ancient and pleasant houses in the large cities. The houses in the busiest quarters go for one reason; those in the less busy for another. The authors of this book lament London's comparative poverty in water-side inns, and the steady diminution in the numbers that exist. "The river front of Hammersmith," they say, for instance, "from the Eyot at Chiswick to the bridge, could show a few years since its special type of ale-houses, but these are rapidly becoming scarcer." They are, indeed: and even beyond the Eyot. The beautiful old "Red Lion" on the Mall, Georgian brick with a vast first-floor room and an ancient grindstone on the river-bank, was shut up in 1913. In 1924 something much older went: the "Burlington," opposite the Church, a long, low, cosy building with overhanging storeys which claimed descent from the century of Agincourt. Such quiet, out-of-the-way inns constantly disappear in London. Why? Because of an unexpected effect of the State's Licensing policy. It is not for me to discuss in this column the rights and wrongs of the licensing laws or the promotion of temperance by a reduction in the number of

SUNDAY MORNINGS

licences. But one result of the policy has been that brewers surrender one licence to get another. When they want a new licence "to meet the needs of a growing district" they surrender an old and less profitable (though still profitable) one. The waterman's tavern, hoary, quiet, a place of cheerful and customary conversation, goes off the map; the gin-palace or the pretentious hotel takes its place. The inns which are squeezed out are of necessity the most secluded, the least noisy, the most clubbable. Even to this one might reconcile oneself were the new public-houses better than they are. But they are usually hideous (though not quite so hideous as those erected twenty years ago), full of mirrors, din, and standing-room only; and even when some attempt is made to erect a pleasant building, the result is usually not a living piece of modern architecture, but a mere imitation of something old. It is an awe-inspiring thought that the chief trustees of our urban architecture are the bankers (who are mostly doing rather well now), the brewers (who are improving), and the multiple-shop-owners, who have up to the present been inaccessible to all appeals made to them to have some care for the frontages they destroy and the frontage they might make.

Let multiple-shop-owners read this book and realise how trade may live with beauty. At least, let them look at these hundreds of lovely pictures. The one defect of the book is a certain heaviness about the text. The authors had a very difficult task. They could not bear to overlook any inn they liked, and catalogues had to fill

THE ENGLISH INN

up a good deal of their space. But though they make a good many pleasant quotations, they might have diversified their text with more curiosities and, quotations apart, their mode of writing is not enlivening. The chief characteristic of their style is a sort of muted staccato; and I have only once detected them in a joke of their own. This occurs in the course of a description, in which their enthusiasm is really communicated, of the "Cheshire Cheese" in Fleet-street. There is a parrot there, very grave in deportment, deplorable in some of its sentiments; it used, in an undertone, to describe the Kaiser in terms that I should not care to repeat—at any rate, here. Our authors refer to this bird thus: "There has always been a cat associated with the 'Cheese.' The parrot, too, is a living symbol of the district." I am glad, I may incidentally remark, that the authors show a genuine appreciation of the "Cheese," because there has been evident in some quarters recently a tendency to underrate the excellence, its real antiquity, and the unaffected way in which it has preserved its traditions. It is alleged that it is a show-place for Americans, and that its claim to be associated with Dr. Johnson is unsupported. It is certainly not overrun with trippers, though many Americans (and why on earth shouldn't they be welcomed?) do make pious pilgrimage thither. There has been none of that bogus sham-antique dressing-up there that has defaced so many agreeable inns in "tourist-resorts." And the evidence for Dr. Johnson's frequentation is excellent. Not only is

SUNDAY MORNINGS

there a strong presumption that the Doctor frequented every tavern within reach of his lodging ("There is no throne like a tavern chair," he said), but there is positive evidence, as good as second-hand evidence can be, from Cyrus Redding and others that he habitually occupied a particular corner in a particular room there. The negative evidence of Boswell's silence means nothing. He knew but a small slice of Dr. Johnson's Life, though he made such unparalleled use of it.

February 7, 1926.

BROAD HALFPENNY DOWN

No two names could more suitably be found together on *The Hambledon Cricket Chronicle*, 1772-1796, than those of Mr. Ashley-Cooper and Mr. Lucas. The former, whose recent productions include a new edition of Pycroft and an exhaustive record of the Eton and Harrow matches, is the most indefatigable of living historians of the game, and Mr. Lucas himself compiled, years ago, a book with *The Hambledon Men* as its title. This work, which is in print at the Oxford University Press, is the most delightful of cricket miscellanies, and includes *inter alia*, John Nyren's *The Young Cricketer's Tutor* and *The Cricketers of my Time*. It should certainly be read in conjunction with the new volume.

Mr. Ashley-Cooper's book is in large measure a summary of facts. He deals with the period 1772-1796, which saw the Club in its prime and in its decline. He gives certain match scores not in *Scores and Biographies*, a match summary for those years during which the little Hampshire village constantly met and defeated All England, a list of officers of the Club, a membership roll, and brief biographies of the Hambledon players. The chief justification for his volume is, however, that two Hambledon documents of great interest are reproduced in it for the first time. Mr. Ashley-Cooper has had access to two manuscript

SUNDAY MORNINGS

volumes, a minute-book and a statement of accounts, chiefly kept by Richard Nyren and the two Bonhams. These volumes are an important supplement to the history of the game in the eighteenth century.

The Hambledon Club was founded about 1750, and by 1756 was very strong. Its years of great glory were those from 1772 to 1787, when the M.C.C. was founded, largely on the initiative of the Hambledon president for the year. The minute-book ends in 1796, just before the death of the elder Nyren, who was secretary. The entries in the M.S. books are mostly brief, and Mr. Ashley-Cooper allows most of them to stand without annotation. They usually deal, as is natural, with the social and business aspects of the Club, but sidelights are thrown on the cricket. On May 25, 1773, it was ordered "That Mr. Richards do endeavour to find out the Expence of A Machine to Convey the Cricketers to distant parts and report the same next meeting." "Machine" sounds odd, but Nyren throws light on it. He records :—

When a match was to be played at a distance, the whole eleven, with umpire and scorer, were conveyed in one caravan, built for their accommodation. Upon one occasion, the vehicle having been overturned, and the whole cargo unshipped, Buck (Peter Stewart) remained at his post, and refused to come out, desiring that they would right the vessel with him in it; for that "one good turn deserved another." This repartee was admired for a week.

BROAD HALFPENNY DOWN

On June 26, 1781, it was "ordered that eleven Hats be procured for the Cricketers and a black one for the Waiter," and on July 16, 1791, there was a discussion on a point of law. "The Umpire said: 'I really think the Ball hit the Ground, but I cannot be positive.'" It wasn't quite the right way to put it, though not quite so bad as the recorded pronouncement of a later and equally candid umpire: "I didn't see it, but it's out." Apparently the decision, if it was a decision was made in an England and Hampshire match on Windmill Down; it is significant that it was referred to a Committee of the M.C.C., including Sir Horace Mann and Col. Lenox (afterwards Duke of Richmond), for it was the establishment and growth of the M.C.C. in the London area that led to the fall of the Hambledon Club from its proud position.

The few actual references to the play in the minutes are supplemented by notes on the matches which Mr. Ashley-Cooper supplies. We find it recorded of the match against England in 1772 that "Lumpy had the honour of bowling out Small, which had not been done for some years." According to the *Reading Mercury* of the time, a match in the next year, 1773, attracted 20,000 spectators. This may rather surprise the pessimists who think it is a new and portentous thing that great crowds should go to watch cricket; and that other tribe who imagine that betting on games is a product of modern debasement may be presented with the *Reading Mercury's* statement regarding a match at Lord's in 1791: "It is

SUNDAY MORNINGS

supposed there was more money depending on this match than on any one ever played before." Money was laid on the old cricket matches as it is on the new boxing matches; there were wagers bound up with the challenges as well as individual bets, and the best amateurs were glad to make an income out of the game. The graceful Lord Frederick Beauclerk, who was not only a lord but a clergyman, derived a regular income from his bets which would make a modern "paid amateur" green with envy. In 1772 it was arranged, according to a contemporary, "that eleven women from Hants shall play, some time this month, with twice the number of Hampton gentlemen, for £500; and what is not a little singular, the odds, it is asserted, are already considerably in favour of the female professors of that noble exercise."

The cricket, as I have observed, comes in but incidentally in the minutes and accounts. The elections and subscriptions occupy a great deal of attention. The mere records of these provide a skeleton history of the club's decline. As time goes on subscriptions (which were heavy) were more difficult to collect, and members were more inclined to resign after paying them. Marylebone was more convenient than Hambledon for gentlemen who did not actually reside there, and more profitable for professionals; the number of matches also declined. A list of gentlemen subscribers in 1795 gives forty-three names; opposite five of these, for the wars were on, is the inscription "Gone to sea," and opposite one the

BROAD HALFPENNY DOWN

comment "Gone to the Devil." However, so long as the Club lasted it kept cheerful. Nobody examining its records could suggest that it took its pleasures sadly. Wine and song, as we know from Nyren, were the principal features of its gatherings. Remembering the glees they sang at the "Bat and Ball" on Broad Halfpenny, he quotes:—

I have been there, and still would go;
'Twas like a little Heaven below!

The extract, I believe, is from Dr. Watts; who perhaps might have found the little Heaven something too convivial. Port and sherry were the staple drinks; to an entry regarding thirty-eight bottles of the one and nine of the other Mr. Ashley-Cooper appends the sufficient footnote: "Hampshire beat Surrey on Windmill Down by 127 runs." Nyren, advertising his tent for the matches, begged leave "to inform the lovers of Cricket that all sorts of Liquors and cold Provision may be found at his Booth on the Down," and the members of the Club shared the tastes of their supporters. What could be more succinct than these two entries for 1781 and 1782?

August 15.—Present at the Boys' Match, Hambledon against Petersfield and Buriton. Mr. Jervoise, Rev. Mr. Cooley, Mr. Richards, and Mr. Leeke, and a fine Haunch of Venison.

September 5, 1782.—At Extra meeting to eat Venison and drink Bonham's and Fitzherbert's Claret.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

It is small wonder that it was ultimately ordered "that the last Meeting of the Hambledon Club be in future of a Moon Light Night."

Amongst the names in the members' list is one "B. Shelley," who is supposed to be old Sir Bysshe, and a John Shakespear, father of the Shakespear who had a brief partnership with Lord Byron in a celebrated Eton and Harrow match. But the oddest name we encounter here has literary associations of another kind. There seems something ominous about it, for it appears in the next to the last entry in the club minutes. The two last entries (1796) run :—

August 29.—[Three members and twelve non-subscribers (including "Mr. Thos Pain, Authour of the rights of Man") present. No business noted.]

September 21.—No gentlemen.

We are not told who brought Tom Paine. Had it been a year earlier we might have presumed his host to have been William Powlett, the famous Radical hunting squire, who was known as Pontius Pilot; but he resigned membership in 1795.

Nobody will ever know how the Hambledon men would have fared against their successors, and we can only dimly apprehend what their bowling was like. The old men who lived during the transition from underhand to round-arm (which they called "throwing") never surrendered the position. They lived in a period of experimentation we have recorded here the names

BROAD HALFPENNY DOWN

of the first man who systematically bowled a length, and the first who systematically played forward ; these things did not happen by accident or without discussion ; those who imagine that cricket theory was born with the nineteenth century are grossly mistaken. As for the Hambledon wickets, the care taken about sowing and rolling them suggests that they may well have been as good as the best village wickets to-day, though modern methods of preparation were unknown. Six days' cricket a week they did not play, and there was no question of a " Gasworks End." Change is incessant and we also may make history. I doubt if Broad Halfpenny was ever, as was the Worcestershire County ground, a few years ago, sown in error with turnip seed ; and it may be taken for certain that a full history of the Hambledon Club would afford no parallel to the case of the spectator at Leyton who dislocated his jaw by yawning at the slowness of the Essex batting.

September 9, 1923.

CRICKET LITERATURE

MR. CHAPPLE says that his cricket anthology, *Some Cover Shots*, is the first to be published. This seems odd, but I suppose we must take it from him : and if he be right, one can safely say that his is the best existing compilation of the kind. A better, nevertheless, is conceivable. "As far as possible," he says, "the present selection is taken from modern books." Why ? Space, we know, is limited. It was quite right to display, as amply as possible, the qualities of contemporary writers such as Mr. Cardus and Mr. Lynd. If the book were good all through we should have no grounds for complaint, even had dead authors been excluded completely. But the book is far from good all through. There are too many instructive and factual extracts, some of them very bald ; too much summary of the technique of cricket, and too many studies of individual characters which are entirely lacking in life. *Cover Shots* is certainly a misnomer for many of them, which would be better described as snicks behind the wicket or clean misses, though I do remember a county captain remarking of a friend of mine who played with him : "Smith has only one shot, and that is a catch to cover." The book might have been substantially improved by the enlargement of the historical section and a wider choice from the literature of the game.

CRICKET LITERATURE

Certainly there is a little Nyren here ; a cricket anthology which omitted him would be self-stultified. But Pycroft does not appear at all, and I suppose that it is by the same token that the poems of Lefroy and Andrew Lang are omitted.

Were cricket literature very rich we should have no need to grumble about omissions ; no need to regret that only the best stanza of Francis (he appears as " Frances "—the authoress of *Sister Songs* presumably) Thompson's lovely poem is quoted. But in point of fact the literature of cricket is very poor—much poorer than the literature of fox-hunting, for example, though that is of necessity the sport of a comparatively few people, and of a comparatively few people with the writing gift. Cricket books are, for the most part, either text-books ; or else historical works composed mainly of statistics ; or else volumes of reminiscences by eminent cricketers without much gift for writing. As soon as a man has captained England or topped the averages some publisher will tempt him to write a book ; books thus produced may be welcome, in a way, but they seldom show any imagination, any gift for description or self-expression, or any unusual power over language. Mr. Chapple has not been fortunate in his choice from these books of modern reminiscences, which mostly pale their ineffectual fires before the glowing tales of the Hambledon men ; and he even seems to have overlooked some of the best of them. A rococo page or two from Albert Knight would have been worth having, or a few anecdotes from the high-spirited book

SUNDAY MORNINGS

published not long ago by Mr. F. B. Wilson. If cricket is weak in prose, it is weaker still in verse. With one or two exceptions the poems that Mr. Chapple prints are barely good enough for a corner in an evening paper. As I have said, he might have added a few better ones. But not many : they do not exist.

Any cricketer, of course, will be able to get through the book without tedium ; most cricketers are quite happy if left alone with a few hundred pages of match scores and averages. Here and there, too, something especially lively will be found. I like to think of the match (to which Mr. W. J. Ford drew attention) played in 1797 between an England XI. and thirty-three of Norfolk : that is, on the assumption that they fielded thirty-three, which must have put to a pretty severe test the batsmen's powers of placing. " W. G.'s " story of the Kingscote Club, in Gloucestershire, is amusing. The club ate and drank very heartily, and, after one orgie with the Epsom Club, the chairman is said to have closed the innings of the claret with the remark : " Gentlemen, I am sorry to say there is only one bottle left, and as it would be ridiculous to divide it among so many, with your permission I'll drink it myself." It is an agreeable description of Mr. Lyon's wicket-keeping that " he would have moved even Wordsworth into a deeper stage of tranquillity " ; and one is pleased to encounter again Wainwright's remark to boys that " the man who puts a ball up on th' off side ought to be given out whether caught out or not." But that

CRICKET LITERATURE

I ought hardly to quote in this place. For it comes from Mr. Cardus, and Mr. Cardus is so much the best of modern writers on cricket that a whole book by him would be much preferable to the anthology which Mr. Chapple has compiled and which owes many of its best pages to Mr. Cardus himself.

And here is in *Days in the Sun* a whole book by Mr. Cardus ; and it is distinctly superior in every regard to Mr. Chapple's pot-pourri. Mr. Chapple's book is chiefly valuable as showing how little that is good has yet been written about cricket ; Mr. Cardus's shows how well cricket can be written about. Mr. Cardus is the critic of *The Manchester Guardian*, a discriminating student of the game, an essayist of considerable power, and a stylist. Those whose chief interest lies in the theory and practice of the game will find in him plenty of subjects for discussion. He has a great range of cricket experience ; he is a detached observer with strong opinions. He is very interesting on the history of the encounter between bowler and batsman, which very much resembles the development of the struggle between means of offence and defence in war. It has left us at present, he laments, with bowlers who think of nothing but stunts and batsmen who adopt the two-eyed stance and are incapable of driving. He is never tired of pointing the contrast between the state of English cricket now and its condition twenty and thirty years ago. Sometimes as he rolls those lists of retired giants off his tongue he rather overdoes it ; his own panegyrics elsewhere on

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Hobbs, Woolley, and Mr. Chapman may be read as a corrective. He tends, also, when deploring both the paucity of outstanding figures and the dullness of so many county sides, to overlook the fact that in these days the majority of the best University cricketers play first-class cricket only intermittently after they leave the University, instead of devoting six days a week all through the summer to it.

All these matters, of course, might be equally acutely and knowledgeably debated by a cricketer totally unable to write, though even when arguing or explaining Mr. Cardus is unmistakably himself. His summary of "the battle of the wits" is the work of a man of letters, and when he complains about modern caution and competitive greed, he does it with a touch not common in "cricket columns":—

In cricket, as in most other pursuits, action will reveal the presence of a philosophy somewhere. The canny philosophy in vogue in the counties to-day is made articulate in nearly every match. The cricketers themselves probably do not know they are expressing it. That is how a philosophy works—insidiously making mouthpieces even of those innocent of it. A young cricketer coming to, say, Old Trafford in 1904 had no choice but to play a cavalier game; his environment impelled him to it. And to-day it seems a young cricketer coming to Old Trafford has little choice but to play a shrewd Fabian game, for Fabianism is now, unfortunately, the current philosophy of action at Old Trafford.

CRICKET LITERATURE

There is about the batmanship of these young men [recent Blues] that self-effacing sameness which happens in any activity so soon as style is looked on as something possessing a fixed character—so soon as it is regarded rather like a fashionable dress, accepted as “the thing,” to be put on by anybody who wishes to be anybody. . . . Care, that killed a cat, might easily kill University cricket altogether.

But this is not the kind of thing that brings out his rarest. There is more of that in his dramatic descriptions—there is a beauty of the Old Trafford Test Match in 1902—of great games and in his portraits of cricketers at work. Nothing so careful as these has been seen since the days when Hazlitt wrote of racquets. Mr. Cardus is a connoisseur in styles, men, and atmospheres: his portraits are studies of character and temperament placed against backgrounds like Canterbury, Bramall-lane, the Oval, and Taunton, the colour and influence of which are felt as a poet would feel them. The essayist has all the other arts ready for reference. He writes of Sutcliffe:—

There is, indeed, a pretty little flick of his bat at every stroke's end; it is the artist's way of expressing delight in work well done—one sees it and thinks of Dickens's flourish of a signature, Whistler's vain but charming butterfly.

S. M. J. Woods to him was “the Squire Western of cricket”; Hearne is “the immaculate son of Turveydrop”; when he gets into the shilling

SUNDAY MORNINGS

seats he wishes Fielding could have encountered a cricket crowd. He quotes Sterne, Chaucer and the philosopher, Locke ; he regrets that Mr. Max Beerbohm has never written an essay called " Going to Lord's on a July Morning " ; he even compares an eminent man's batting to " L'Apprenti Sorcier " of Dukas. Now this is not everybody's writing. I should think that if the cricketer in question, who I daresay has no liking for modern programme music, were to read this and then hear that composition, he would look for Mr. Cardus with a gun. What W. G. Grace did not know about cricket was not worth knowing ; but had he been told that somebody's stroke was like Whistler's butterfly, some pungent remarks would have been piped through the beard.

Yet Mr. Cardus's quotations and references are not overdone or dragged along by the heels ; he writes as nature makes him write ; and he is at his very best in passages where his intellect operates only to give him the right words for expressing some simple sentiment of affection or regret, where he rejoices in the spectacle of health in action, or recalls a vanished scene of sun, green grass and animated play, or suddenly sees the game like all man's toys, against the background of eternity. He writes of W. G. himself :—

Let the morning be quiet and mellow, and there seems in the air about the St. John's Wood-road, at least to one not too familiar with the place, a sense of the dead old days, causing a melancholy which no doubt one ought to be ashamed of. The mind is made by this

CRICKET LITERATURE

something in the St. John's Wood air to play with fancies of Victorian greatness hanging about the spot; of a gleaming hansom-cab at the entrance, and a black-bearded man, looking mountainous in everyday clothes, getting out while folk standing around murmur "W. G. !"; of simple-faced men in wide, uncreased trousers proceeding along the pavement—the names of them, likely enough, Lockwood, Lohmann, Richardson—all keen to "get at the old 'un." No lover of cricket as he wanders about Lord's can very well keep the thought of Grace from his mind, for though Grace was a Gloucestershire man, surely he lorded the green earth at Lord's till the very spirit of him may be said to have gone into the grass. . . . Why should it ever happen to a cricketer that a June morning comes on which the sun begins in the old comfortable way to climb the sky, and Lord's stands in the light full of animation, and he no longer there to know of it?

He who could answer that could answer everything: the question lies behind Thompson's verses and is implicit in much of Mr. Cardus's writing. For myself, the sooner he writes another book, the better I shall be pleased; my only complaint is that he confines himself almost exclusively to the aristocracy of the game. Possibly the demands of journalism are responsible for this, but I wish that, over and above the articles, he would allow himself to range more freely over village cricket. He is fastidious as to the art, but village cricket provides compensations in the way of nature; town cricket is a hot-house

SUNDAY MORNINGS

growth compared with it ; if it be rough, it at least knows nothing about the two-eyed stance pad-play, and Mr. Cardus's other aversions, and its settings have a quality that even Lord's, the fine product of civilisation, must lack. Is it not astonishing that the epic of a day's cricket, from dawn to dusk, has not yet been written, and that for one cricket club in modern fiction, there are a hundred night clubs ?

July 13, 1924.

THE LITERATURE OF SPORT

The Game's Afoot, edited by Bernard Darwin, is "an anthology of sports, games, and the open air." The extracts are grouped under sectional headings, and the general arrangement reveals a perception of the affinities of species which is no doubt hereditary with Mr. Darwin. "Foxhunting" comes first; "Riding," "Racing," and "Coaching" are with it. Through "Shooting," "Dogs," and "The Ring" we approach the games proper, with "Cricket" at the head of them and "Billiards" at the foot. Billiards is the only one of Mr. Darwin's activities which is not commonly played in the open air. Via "Fishing" we come to the marine pursuits—sailing, rowing, and swimming; this leads by an easy transition to walking; then comes a general section on the open air; and we end with "Good Cheer," and a suitable plentitude of Dr. Johnson, Dickens, and beer. The vicious circle, as it must appear to our strenuous prophets of doom, is complete. We have had a very orgy of all the things for which the unfortunate Signor Mussolini is unable to spare the time.

It is, as it was bound to be, an admirable anthology: for Mr. Darwin is a philosopher and a man of letters as well as an athlete. He has a love of style in everything, and a sure instinct for the spirit behind everything, and all his extracts,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

divers though the technical aspects of them may be, are in retrospect—blended, as it were, into a single expression of his own very centrally English outlook. His range of reading is very wide, and it would be rash to assume, where one finds some favourite piece omitted, that he is not acquainted with it. Such omissions, in any event, are few. The good verse passages available are not numerous, and I am surprised that something from Mr. Masfield's *Reynard*—the meet with its fine glimpse of the hounds, or the ride home under the moon—is not included. And under "Sailing" we might have expected something from Mr. Belloc—such an essay as *Picking up Moorings*, or a passage from *The Cruise of the Nona*. In a general way, where a section is deficient, it is not Mr. Darwin's fault: material of the right quality simply does not exist. It is noticeable that the older sports have far finer literatures than the younger. The cricket passages are numerous and excellent, and there might have been more; but the records of football are almost bare. Mr. Darwin has to content himself with the scrambling, unwieldy, undeveloped games of the early multitudes in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, and a short, but beautiful passage by Mr. Eric Parker about the Eton Wall Game. It is as though, in our modern, specialised, self-conscious days men were afraid of losing dignity by writing of vulgar occupations not consecrated by a long literary lineage.

Cross-country and track-running find no place at all in Mr. Darwin's pages. Yet here, as elsewhere, are things for the soul to experience and the

THE LITERATURE OF SPORT

seeing eye to observe. There is nothing under the sun of which that is not true. In Mr. Darwin's own sphere of games this is as true as elsewhere. Take an extreme example. Take a game which is void of the elation of physical activity, and not played (at least in my experience) in a Stadium packed with intense humanity, or in an elm-surrounded meadow, or under the downs, or (drawing to a close) beneath the slowly-defining wraith of a crescent moon: to wit, Bridge. Even there the poet may find beauty in the spectacle and the thinker significance in the history. There is a four. The shaded lamp pours radiance on a green table and on glasses half-full of yellowish liquid, each a complex of light and shadows. Motions of dealing and gathering and sorting are made, with the slightest slitherings breaking the silence. The clock ticks, the fire ripples, somebody calls. There are four fans of cards, sprinkled with strange feudal effigies, with an antiquity of descent and change behind them: kings and queens and dauphins surviving still after a multitude of adaptations. There are four minds, keen or dense, working in various degrees of isolation and contact; four temperaments, brave, fool-hardy, cautious, cowardly; there is a fluctuating contest; there is fortune, overwhelmingly favourable, relentlessly adverse, tantalising, doubtful. There is progress, slow or rapid, easy or hampered, to an end. There is the passage of time; there is the world outside; and beyond, the dark sky and the constellations. All is there: humanity, with its

SUNDAY MORNINGS

life measured by heart beats, yet content in the contest of an hour, and making the most of things ; the inexplicable diversity of character, the delicious inconsequence of chance, the drug that secures a momentary oblivion, the pageant that engenders thoughts of eternity. So might a contemplative man look upon a bridge-table and smile and weep.

And what material there is for the philosophical essayist in the history of the rule and method of the game. What obscure human cravings were satisfied by the change (never quite relished by the expert few) from whist to bridge, and the other change from bridge to auction bridge. What force led to the assault of contract bridge, and what to its defeat ? These things are interesting ; but equally interesting to the student of affairs is the gradual divergence between the American and the English games. Most suggestions for change in bridge come from America. America invented the double of one as a signal ; that has been generally accepted here, and at this very moment the ironmonger's excited wife in Stow-on-the-Marsh may be having it explained to her by the enthusiastic bank manager of that remote, indeed non-existent, town. But the Americans have introduced other changes which we obstinately refuse. First they abolished chicane. Then they decided that, although nominal point values should remain the same, a call of five clubs should rank higher (as a call) than one of four spades. Underneath those changes is it not possible to feel a hatred of natural inequalities, a republican Utopianism, which is foreign to ourselves ? If

THE LITERATURE OF SPORT

produced, this tendency may lead to all suits being proclaimed of equal value, and in the end to everybody being given an equally good hand, if not to a complete cessation of play and a general announcement that, under the Constitution, all bridge players are not merely free, but equal, and that the arbitrary superiority of a King over a Queen no longer exists. Something, at all events, is (as the Americans would say) "back of it." There is a world of speculation involved here ; focus on any point and all life lies behind it.

Let me not, however, wander too far from Mr. Bernard Darwin. Amongst other things, he introduces the reader to many fine modern passages. In the Alpine Department I should like to have seen the Conquest of the Matterhorn supplemented by the Conquest of the Wetterhorn (a more exciting story, though the mountain be not so pointed), but otherwise we have the best. Amongst the finest things are a passage on golf by Sir W. Simpson, one on rackets by the late Alfred Lyttelton, and two beautiful extracts from Lord Grey's book on Fly-Fishing, the best paragraphs of which have the settled impersonal quality of the finest English prose. The far-flung net embraces Jeffrey Day's fine poem on Flying, G. W. Steevens's on a thirst raised rather south of Suez, and even Gilbert White on the movements of tortoises, classified (if you please) under "Walking."

One great gap remains. A very small passage from Mr. Darwin himself is included—probably at the request of the publishers. A modest antho-

SUNDAY MORNINGS

logist could do no more ; an immodest one would be a bad anthologist. Yet it almost makes one wish that somebody else had compiled the book. Of all professional and regular writers about games, Mr. Darwin is probably the best who has ever appeared. Not only does he (an expert and an international) write constantly in *The Times* about golf competitions (very difficult to render lively) with a grace and technical skill that are unrivalled, but he regularly contributes meditations on golf that are really meditations on life and human nature with golf as a starting point. He writes with ease and elegance, always relates the trivial to the universal ; pulls his own leg as well as that of the human race ; is never too much disturbed by temporary excitements ; conveys instruction modestly and learning flippantly ; quotes exquisitely ; and always appears to enjoy writing—the most difficult of all feats to a man who has to do something every week, whatever the state of the public barometer or his own private thermometer.

If a foreigner wishes to understand the English mind, the English way of life, the English aspirations, he would do better to read Mr. Bernard Darwin than any of our so-called contemporary “thinkers,” whether “advanced” or “reactionary.”

January 9, 1927.

“BRIGHTER CRICKET”

FORGIVE the headline. I am not going to suggest wide stumps, a narrow bat, a two-ball over, no boundaries, or no pad-play: the small ball has already been tried and found wanting. But after reading *Good Enough for England* by Richard Randolph, published in *The Boys' Friend Library* at fourpence, I could think of no other that would fit.

I bought the book at the railway bookstall on Godalming Station. Up with the lark that morning, I had already exhausted the newspapers, and I wanted something to read in the train. My eye was suddenly caught by a lurid cover, amid rows of lurid covers, more unusual than the rest. The ground-work was red. The scene was just inside the window of a cricket pavilion, with a match “progressing” in the background. In the foreground a young cricketer, just in from the wicket, was reeling, his eyes closed, his cap falling from his head, his bat dropping from his gloved hand: and over the window-sill there leaned a sombreroed and red-bearded man blazing a revolver (held in the left hand) at him. Curiosity was violently aroused. Was this, I speculated, a left-handed bowler whom the hero had done out of his place in the team? Or was he (for he certainly looked it) a Bolshevik who had realised that sport was the great stabilising influence in

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Britain, or was revenging upon a typical English "boorjoi" the murder of Voikoff, well-known to have been instigated by the callous Chamberlain and the bloodthirsty Baldwin? He turned out to be neither, but he was almost as good.

"That must be Arthur Richardson, the tall fellow with the glasses, next to Bardsley. And that broad-shouldered chap would be Ellis, I'm pretty sure. But who's Copper-nob?" Thus the first paragraph. Copper-nob, in point of fact, is a young, red-haired giant, who has recently discovered that he was born in England and hopes to discover his real name and claim the estate which is his due. He has proved himself a first-rate cricketer, and Collins is in hopes of bringing him in as a supernumerary member of the Australian team, which is too weak in bowling. This is not to be. No sooner has he landed than Tom meets Ken Carden, captain of Cardenshire, and his comrade:—

The Earl of Benridge, who had once—when he had been called Billy Chilswell—been a pro. in the county team.

They naturally carry him off to Cardenshire; discover him (chiefly through his red hair) to be T. H. Fielding, heir to the Fielding property; rapidly satisfy the M.C.C. as to his birth qualification, and play him in a trial match.

There was no happier man in England than Kenneth Carden. Married to the woman he loved, with no need to trouble about money,

BRIGHTER CRICKET

the leader of a county team which idolised him, he found life very good.

That was something to start on ; he found life better still when, in the trial match, his new recruit made 76 and took all ten wickets. All looked well for the county ; the only question was whether Tom would elect to play for Australia or for England ; the Australians' spirits fell when he turned Australia down ; but here his career began to be chequered.

Not his cricket career. He had his off-days when he only made twenty or thirty and took but few wickets. But he did as well as a man could wish :—

“ Cardenshire trying a new man, it seems,” said more than one close follower of the game, scanning the lists in the dailies that morning—if not in that precise form of words, in words to that effect.

That first match was against Glamorgan :—

Ryan sent down a very slow one, well pitched up. Tom slammed it over the ropes, and the spectators roared.

Tom's first ball in county cricket !

Ryan sent down a faster one, a trifle short. Tom got it hard to the on boundary.

So he went on :—

Many a time before has a man playing in his first big match run into three figures. But it

SUNDAY MORNINGS

may well be doubted whether any man going in ninth wicket down has ever achieved the feat under such conditions.

Before he went on to bowl, the revolver incident occurred, and his head was grazed ; but he defied the doctor and won the match. Kent came next : —

Hardinge and Collins were first in. Collins took strike.

Tom sent his middle stump flying.

Seymour came next.

He hardly meant to touch that ball. It would have been better left alone—perhaps . . .

Thus far in first-class cricket Tom Fielding had taken four wickets without a run scored off him.

“ You’ve found a good man there, Carden,” said L. H. W. Troughton, who used to captain Kent. Against Derbyshire, Tom took eleven for 75, and on the last afternoon he received this telegram :—

“ You are chosen for The Rest at Lords. Can you play.—Warner.”

In the Rest *v.* England match he had little chance. He threw Hobbs out, and made a sensational catch, but he bowled very little :—

He got one for six ; but as it was Strudwick, he could not feel elated about it.

In the first Test match he fielded as substitute,

BRIGHTER CRICKET

and Carr "came right across the ground to pat him on the back" for a catch. But his hundred against Hampshire, when Brown missed him and he hit the last ball clean out of the ground, reaffirmed his claims, and he played against the Australians at Lord's. There were bad moments :

A hush fell over the crowded mounds. A funereal silence brooded over Lord's.

The wind dropped. The flag over the pavilion drooped limply.

It seemed that the Lion's tail was down.

But it came all right in the end. "He got Bardsley, Andrews, Taylor, and Arthur Richardson in five overs," and, all told, took "seven for 28 on a pitch still all but perfect," and "caught the three men who had not fallen to his bowling." At Sheffield he did not bowl so well, but :—

Carr came to Tom Fielding in the pavilion.

"Would you care about going in first with Hobbs?" he asked. "Holmes isn't feeling quite up to the mark. Say if you'd rather not, and I'll go in myself, or ask Jupp to."

Tom did.

"Shall I take the bowling first?" Hobbs asked, as they moved through the enclosure.

"Thanks very much," murmured Tom gratefully.

Hobbs, running, fell down in the middle of the pitch :—

Macartney turned, ball in hand, Tom swung

SUNDAY MORNINGS

round as if to go back, Macartney threw at the wicket Hobbs had left.

Then, swinging round again, Tom rushed past Hobbs, and raced the ball for the imperilled wicket, leaving the Surrey man amazed for the moment by his tactics.

Of course he'd cunningly run himself out instead of the invaluable Hobbs. This match was washed out by rain. In the end all hung upon the fifth Test at the Oval. Australia made 561; England 98. England, not unnaturally, followed on. When seven wickets were down for 563 :—

Tom Fielding and Maurice Tate came out of the pavilion gate together. . . . They got to work at once. . . . Australia needed 214 for victory. . . . But they did not get them. Tom was irresistible. What Jack Gregory had done for Australia he did for England. Tate and Macaulay were able helpers, and England won by 62 runs.

Cardenshire won the championship, also presumably owing to this versatile hero; and Tom won the estates. But what of the revolver?

Well, it was a nervous time for Carden and the Earl, and a worrying time for the Australians, whose company Tom much frequented. For his villainous cousin, who would succeed if he died, had a gang; and the gang attempted Tom's life about twice a week, or once per match. There was the revolver shot in Cardenshire. There was the kidnapping in London, which kept Tom (and

BRIGHTER CRICKET

all the solicitous Australians who missed him) up all night in the middle of a Test Match. There were the Mills bombs dropped over the bridge at the punt in Maidstone, there was the attempt in the railway-corridor by the man with a false beard, there was the dastardly affair of the poisoned needle, and there was the nearly-successful throw of the dagger, a deadly weapon, sped with "a curious flick," straight at Tom's heart, by his cousin, now disguised as a clergyman. This was outside Old Trafford. Happily the best slip-field in the world was on the spot :—

Gregory did not see the action. But he saw the glint of sunlight on the shining blade, and his hand shot out. Within three inches of Tom's chest he gripped the haft.

"Murder," he cried. "Find the man who threw this!"

They didn't find him. Really and truly, cricketers of both countries are not here represented as a very enterprising lot. "When will the police round up those scoundrels?" asked Collins, and "I wonder what those blighters will try next?" is about as far as any of them get, from the earliest outrage when Tom is tipped into Boulter's Lock until the climax, when the villains, having fallen out, kill each other. "Not enough evidence yet," is their usual comment. One is glad to see so strong a sense of law prevailing in any section of the community.

Romance may have fled the intellectual novel, but, evidently, she still has her pastures. For the

SUNDAY MORNINGS

rest this composition is remarkable on two counts. It has no heroine (for the ex-pro Earl does *not* turn out to have a sister who loves red hair), and it makes the freest use of real people. We often find real people in novels under thin disguises; here they are introduced in person. Mr. Gregory, perhaps, has no reason to complain; nor perhaps has Mr. Jupp, who seems to be the author's favourite amongst English cricketers. But all those batsmen who are bowled for supposititious ducks, all those fieldsmen who are described as missing catches which never were offered them outside the pages of this book may well feel aggrieved. How would members of another profession feel about it were a novelist's heroine to get into the divorce court and the author to write: "It isn't very often that Sir John Simon fails, but he made a thorough mess of it on this occasion, and Ermyntrode lost her case," or "Sir Patrick Hastings put up a much worse show than was expected"? How should I myself feel were I to open a story about a hero who started a paper and find myself confronted with: "Much to his disappointment he obtained from Mr. J. C. Squire an utterly rotten article which nobody but a madman would have printed"? However, so long as this innovation is restricted to the world of cricketers I don't much mind.

I forgot to add that one of the villains, before the last desperate coup, in a truly superior way opens a speech thus:—

My information is that during the next two

BRIGHTER CRICKET

or three weeks—that is, before the final Test match, as, I believe, it is called, between England and Australia, which is to be played somewhere in the Kennington district. . . .

This is almost good enough for the High Court of Justice.

June 19, 1927.

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

FIRST of all for the title: *My Circus Life*, by James Lloyd, being the Life and Adventures and the World Travels and Experiences of an Artist and Circus Proprietor, now aged 79 years. The last of the Mohicans emanated from *The Cradle of the Circus World*, Astley's Amphitheatre, Westminster Bridge-road, London. The manner of this is precisely that of circus posters; and whether Mr. Lloyd wrote his book, or merely dictated it (we are not told which), every page has the right ring.

Very simply and conversationally he tells the story of a long life, mostly spent in the circus business. He had brief lapses into hotel-keeping and the vending of bacon (he prides himself that he knows how to cut it with profit), but these were merely interruptions in a half-century of work as showman and performer. His father was at Astley's; at four years old, he says, "I was a lively kiddy, and would be among the ponies, sometimes caught on their backs in the stable. I had no fear." He was little older when, at the "Old Vic" (then the "Coburg") he stole up into the flies to see a play, went to sleep, and fell thirty-five feet on to the stage, splitting his skull, so that a silver plate had to be put in. The enterprising child was then apprenticed to the celebrated Mr. Ginnett; and before he had been

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

with him long astonished all beholders by throwing a somersault over a pony—which resulted in a broken hand. He began to perform; he began to be paid; he tried drink. With that mixture of adventurousness and prudence which has evidently always marked him, he tried every sort of liquor in turn, one sort each night. “I cared for none of these. I fell back on ginger-beer, and stuck to it for twenty years. I had plenty of chance of being a champion boozier. My business was the attraction.” Immediately afterwards we come to “We called at a town called Rochdale. I saw a book in a shop called *Self-Help*.” The lessons in it seem to have borne fruit; shortly afterwards he began accumulating a fortune by selling hot chestnuts to the rest of the company, and by the time he was twenty-five he was able to buy a circus for £3,000. This in spite of the fact that he had by then acquired a wife and five children. The children were treated with typical good sense. “One had the measles. I put the four others with her who had the complaint. They all had the measles together. It saved a lot of bother.”

He had ups and downs, bad seasons and good; he took them all as they came. Now he was a highly-paid bareback performer at Hengler's; now he was peregrinating the States of America with a vast company, including “223 horses, 22 elephants, 2 white sacred bulls, 16 camels, 32 cages of wild animals, 22 freaks of Nature, etc.”; and now he was on his own in Ireland coping with the remarkable natives of that country with stratagems

SUNDAY MORNINGS

equal to their own. He always seems to have been equal to the occasion, even when left alone in a camp of wild Red Indians who pressed him to stay with them and showed him the scalp of an Englishman. It is a very short book, but contains, in summary form, enough material for many romances.

There is an introduction by Mr. G. K. Chesterton. He does not, unfortunately, seize the opportunity of giving us an essay on Circuses. He must have spent some of his happiest hours in circuses, and there are times at which he seems to see the whole universe as a circus: the Cosmos Circus, with the Unique Solar System, the 7 Planet Sisters 7, a Grand Galaxy of Shooting Stars, Miss Luna Moon, Facial Contortionist—"etc," as Mr. Lloyd would say. Here he is on other ground considering chiefly two things. One is the old subject, so often discussed among those who practise the art of writing, of the peculiar quality of strength and vividness that often appears spontaneously in the writing of men unaccustomed to the pen. The other is the value of such narratives as this to persons who wish to form a view of the society in which we live. "If," he says,

"We are to have autobiographies of the different trades and tasks that make up the strange economic complexity or chaos of our society, this is how most of them ought to be written. This is how the facts ought to be brought before us; the facts altogether untouched by the fads. For some such books will be at best a curiosity of literature; but there

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

are others who have a larger curiosity about life. These will want to form their opinions from something else besides the pamphlets and speeches of opinionated people. Before they join one humane league to encourage theatres or another humane league to suppress circuses, before they jump to conclusions from the jumping-off ground of theories, they ought to have read a great many books like Mr. Lloyd's book, or meet a great many men like Mr. Lloyd. The great difficulty in all our debates, which are supposed to be so democratic, is that the pronouncement upon a problem is so often made by the man to whom it is only a theorem. I mean the man was not faced with the thing to be done, but only with the thing to be demonstrated."

Some such reflections are bound to arise in the minds of many of Mr. Lloyd's readers. I have not yet—what restraint in a reviewer!—used the word "document." It is so commonly used of works which really have life in them, that one sometimes gets the impression that all life is merely the raw material for historians and economists, and that the business of biographers, novelists, travellers, and poets is to supply them with this raw material in as fine a form as possible. Yet it is certainly true that we should draw our conclusions from knowledge and not from assumptions; and Mr. Lloyd's book gives a more convincing, and a more useful, picture of life in certain circles than I have anywhere seen. He is not wheedling his audience, he is not posing, and he has no axe to grind. He is not primarily

SUNDAY MORNINGS

moved by a desire to get the Circuses put upon the Rates, nor to get them abolished, nor to forbid stud-grooms to smoke, nor to raise the wages of trapeze artists. All he does is to remember things he has seen and done, set them down with scarcely any kind of order and aiming at no kind of unified impression (which usually means a lop-sided one), hoping that an old man's memories may interest a generation which cannot (he supposes) produce Mohicans of the kind he knew.

Mr. Lloyd has his opinions about everyday conduct ; no man can write without betraying something about himself. But he is silent about politics (except where he observes their sad effects upon other people), and not prone to generalisations about anything else. Flaubert and Maupassant were violently personal propagandists compared with this artist, who records murder and love, feats of courage and practical jokes, joys and griefs, profits and losses, in the same laconic and dispassionate strain. Only twice is he tempted to engage in the least little suspicion of an argument. Most of his life he was an owner of draught horses. Occasionally he came into conflict with the inspectors of the R.S.P.C.A., whom he regards as being, on occasion, too pernickety. He was consciously not the man to ill-treat a beast ; and his resentment at the suggestion that he was, made him play tricks on the Society's representatives, as, for example, painting a cream horse with rose-pink splashes at vital points, which led to a case in court and complete rout of the inspector. Here, perhaps, one cannot

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

entirely sympathise with him. He would scarcely, I imagine, suggest that cruelty to horses does not exist, or even that it does not exist in the circus world.

His other complaint is more of an "indignant protest" than a grumble. It is lodged against those who allege that the training of animals to perform necessarily involves cruelty. Here, again, there has certainly been cruelty, and the cruelty should be stopped; but there has been exaggeration, and there has also been a mass of idiotic allegations by the kind of people who enjoy suspecting other people of wickedness, and like "putting a stop to things" for its own sake. This was very forcibly borne in on myself when I read the evidence of a witness before the official Committee which considered the question of performing animals. This witness categorically stated that no dog had ever, without cruelty, been taught to climb a ladder. It happened that I myself was for some years the possessor of a lumbering great bull-dog who climbed every ladder he saw. I had not flogged him, I had not starved him, I had not, by mingled cajolery and kicks, compelled him to do the fiftieth time what he had refused to do forty-nine times. No; he invented it himself. He saw a child climb a step-ladder erected in a garden, and he followed the child. The child came down; the bulldog went up alone and perched on the top. Later it became a habit with him to climb such ladders, turn his clumsy carcase at the top, and then descend. From that he proceeded to ordinary

SUNDAY MORNINGS

ladders ; and when painters were decorating the outside of the house he had to be chained up (which was almost cruel) because he put the unfortunate artisans into a state of terror by sprawling, rung by rung, up their long, slender, elastic ladders, shaking them with his weight and showing, as he went, fangs which made the men quite unnecessarily afraid that they were going to be bitten by a bull-dog in mid-air—decidedly not an experience to be sought for. Mr. Lloyd has encountered the same kind of beast. He had, for instance, a giant donkey, sixteen and a half hands high, which he bought from Lord Bandon. This donkey, obstinate and unexpected, like the rest of his race, was utterly unmanageable until he was wanted to perform ; he would lie down in the road, thirty men could not move him, and he would have to be left to his own devices. But he turned up at the show, and as soon as his music started, in he trotted to join his peers in the Great Donkey Drill.

Mr. Lloyd trained all sorts of animals. Among them were two racing pigs, the larger of whom "always cut the corners off to get first"—

I have trained pigeons and goats to ride on horseback, and also trained a goose, a ram, and monkeys. My pig Jack was a most respectable pig ; if he saw a pig on one side of the street, he would cross to the other. I trained ten goats to perform together, donkeys, horses, and ponies. Jack slept under my carriage, and he never left it. He was as good as a watchdog.

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

I will maintain that my pig Jack had an affection for me. He was always going about uneasy till he found me. If my goose was in another field, I only had to blow a whistle, and he would come flying to me and drop at my feet, and quack as much as to say, "I am here." For advertisement in every town I took my performing donkey holding a basket in his mouth, followed by Jack the pig, Johnny the goose, the ram, and three goats. Fancy all these following a man down the street! . . . I remember one day the billposter came to me with his bill to be paid. The ram stood on his hind legs, rushed at the billposter, and butted him, and sent him to the ground. My Joey the donkey also went for him. The billposter took himself off. Was all this obtained by cruelty?

There is no doubting that Mr. Lloyd reciprocated the affection of pig, ram, donkey, and goose. The most affecting passage in his book, told as plainly as the rest, is that in which he tells us how he went to Arabia to buy horses. Two French officers (was it Algeria?) took him out to shoot wild horses: he shot at one, under instructions.

He gave me his gun to fire at a certain horse. I fired and wounded a very nice horse. He ran a little lame, and came towards us, and he walked up to where I was standing, and fell dead at my feet. I have never used a gun since. It was very touching.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

With that characteristically terse remark we may leave him. He is seventy-nine, philosophical, and enjoying the music-hall successes of his grandchildren.

August 16, 1925.

CLOWNS

Clowns and Pantomimes, by M. Willson Disher, large and lavishly illustrated, certainly contains something for everybody. It opens with a learned disquisition, no less illuminating than most, on the classification of human emotions and the springs of laughter. Here we have diagrams, illustrating the importance and relations of Love, Fear, Anger, Contempt, Superiority, Pity, and so forth; we have also copious references to Professor Bergson and the "Social Psychology" of Professor McDougall. Mr. Disher's explanation of laughter seems plausible so far as it goes, and will no doubt continue to seem so until the next theorist demolishes him as he demolishes his predecessors. One truth at least he does emphasise: the fact that many philosophers have written elaborately of laughter without apparently having themselves any sense of humour. The best of them too frequently confine themselves to wit; the worst are like Professor Freud, who, in his remarkable work on this subject, betrayed no sign whatever of first-hand amusement, and treated specimen jokes as though they were specimen meteorological observations, investigating Joke A, well-attested by Schmidt, and Joke B, which had been accepted as a Joke by Schultz and Muller. This prologue may tax the patience of some of those who have

SUNDAY MORNINGS

been attracted to the work by the statement on the wrapper. "The book contains, among much other new material, the authentic life-story of the famous Grock." They may also, if they expected a book of cheerful gossip, knit their brows rather over Mr. Disher's researches into the early harlequinades and his disquisitions on the *Commedia dell' arte*. Nevertheless, if they stick to it, they will find what they want.

Seldom have I seen a book containing such variegated material. Mr. Disher quotes with equal nonchalance Plato and Mr. H. G. Hibbert, the philosophers of Academe and the raconteurs of the *Referee*. Parts of his book might have been written by a don at Oxford or Cambridge, and parts by the reminiscent correspondent of an evening journal. He takes his time over it, but he does come at last from "Arlequin Mercure Galant" and "Ulysse and Circe" to Joseph Grimaldi; and from him to "Gus" Harris and Dan Leno; and from them to Arthur Roberts, George Graves, the Griffiths Brothers, Ha Weldon, and the promised, and undoubtedly fascinating, biography of Grock. On one page you will find a photograph of Mr. Charles Spencer Chaplin, in his tight coat and loose trousers, small hat and large boots; on the next you are brought back with a jerk to Italian origins, to Scaramouche and the Goya-like drawings of Callot, all too much like those other drawings of *The Miseries of War*. As a work of reference the book will be invaluable; every important phase, aspect, and personality is well covered; and there is a great

CLOWNS

wealth of incidental quotation, such as that concerning the Caroline jazz bands, which consisted of "One with a Violl, the next with Taber and Pipe, Knockers and Bells, Tongs and Tray, gridiron and shooring horne." But it is also a work of piety. The harlequinade is done for. There are great clowns, but they work, in a great variety of disguises, for the films or on the music-hall stage. The regular theatre has no room for them; and, in Mr. Disher's opinion, this is symptomatic of a general disease in the contemporary drama, which is incapable of great tragedy because it is incapable of great buffoonery. He is the historian of several arts and art forms; he is also the celebrator of the pleasures of our, and his, youth. Things have changed; the old enjoyments are not to be had; a wilful generation has flung away its treasure; he carries us back to admire and to grieve. There are pantomimes still, but they are not what they were. Yet ought we to go, even if they had never been modified? I doubt it.

"We'll to the woods no more. The laurels are all cut." It is better to live with the golden memories of our childhood than to attempt to recover the experiences which gave birth to them. We go to a modern pantomime and find that all has changed; and the more it is the same thing the more it has changed. Songs change their tone, the time of the old music is lost, the livelier iris fades from the comedian's nose. The harlequinade has gone; or, if it is revived it is revived in a corrupt form, with inferior clowns,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

and scamped ; rough rude scene-shifters in the wings pester the performers to get this unnecessary epilogue over and done with. How could a modern performance equal those which we saw in our youth ? The faithfulest imitation would disappoint us. The clowns we knew were all Clown, an immortal ; Joey with the sausages, who called the Pantaloon father. Lithe, masked Harlequin with his glittering snake's skin and his resilient wand, Columbine flitting light as thistledown, they also were enduring types. We neither knew nor cared about the names and the relative merits of the actors who represented them in various years, and whose records the historian disinters ; in recollection they are all fused and live, each with his characteristic movements and beauty, a life independent, like the gods of Greece and the Seven Champions of Christendom. And the Transformation Scene ! How could a pantomime be complete which did not include that, and reproduce the ineffable splendour that once we saw in it ? Veil after veil of shimmering gauze was lifted, and disclosed new groups of motionless divinities, seated, standing or flying, a transcendent statuary, heroic and impalpable in the shafts of radiance, clear-cut yet insubstantial. Another veil rose, or another noiselessly parted, its halves drifting back to invisibility ; a new recess of silver or golden light was divulged, peopled with ideal beings, inhabitants of a world of shining armour and flooding sunshine, flowers, rainbows and butterflies' wings. As each new revelation came, a sigh like a wave swept over

CLOWNS

the silence. We stared, we waited, another miraculous movement, self-determined, and the caverns of glory deepened again ; till at last, at a height and a distance that seemed immeasurably great, the glowing heart of the scene was revealed, and there, a wonder for which all this had been the ritual preparation, guarded by all the multitude of forms in that enchanted confusion of lights, was the Fairy, the Goddess, erect and immobile, beautiful beyond human hope, type of all the lovely inaccessibilities of childhood, type still of all those of later life. Of that the Transformation Scene was symbolical ; it symbolised also the passage of mortal things. At each change, each stage, which seemed as though it must be the last, yet was not the last, the heart was charged with expectancy, longing for more ; yet cried with the perpetual accent : " Stay, fleeting moment, stay ! " And when the final revelation had been made, it seemed no longer there than vanished ; there was no time to absorb the essence of it ; and in so going it was like all things poignant in their evanescent beauty, sunsets, and the petals of the cherry tree, falling stars, and the leaves of the willow, the bloom of youth, and life itself.

What, in our sophistication, should we recover if we saw the very thing again ? Nothing, very likely : we should see a cumbrous structure of tinsel and canvas, tawdry lights, and fleshy women in absurd costumes. When we regret it, it is our own youth that we regret ; and we make an error if we think that the young now are not

SUNDAY MORNINGS

deriving similar illusions from other objects, and storing up for themselves the like memories and the like regrets for things departed, which once were perfect and can never be replaced. The pantomime as we knew it was the pantomime as it must be ; yet what seems in retrospect a static and a legendary thing was a thing then, as always, changing and full of innovations. Our transformation scene was a comparatively modern invention ; our harlequinade a degenerate development, which, in its day, had revolted the purists and disappointed those who remembered an earlier form and could not bear its disappearance. It was the early nineteenth century which converted the clown into Joey (presumably after Grimaldi) and the Pantaloon into his father, as it was the later nineteenth century which began using the harlequinade as a medium for tradesmen's advertisements, and the twentieth that found itself unable any longer to enjoy humour at the expense of old age in the person of Pantaloon. Every detail of the constant process of change is explained and documented by Mr. Disher ; but, unlike most theatrical chroniclers, a race especially prone to think that the future can never equal the past, he is eager to see what the next generation will bring forth, and convinced that there are seeds of life in the old pantomimes of the nineteenth century, with their mixture of fairy tale, poetry, and buffoonery. It hasn't much to do with Clowns, but I found one of the most interesting passages of his book, that in

CLOWNS

crude as they were, have brought the stories of fairy-tale and popular legend, of *Cinderella*, *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Babes in the Wood*, *Aladdin*, and *Jack and the Beanstalk*, to a point where they are proper material, ripe for treatment by a poetic dramatist of the race of Shakespeare, who will be saved, as Shakespeare and the Greeks were saved, from the labour of starting from the beginning with their superhuman world and their themes, and assisted, as those were assisted, by a wealth of associations all ready in the popular mind.

September 6, 1925.

THE SHOWMAN

NOT long ago I reviewed here the delightful little autobiography of a showman ; now, reprinted by Messrs. Dent, we have the classic work of the kind, *Seventy Years a Showman*, by Lord George Sanger, the memoir that Lord George Sanger, greatest of his race, published in 1910, when he was eighty-three and in retirement. Whether he wrote every word of it himself is not stated ; there are sentences that seem to betoken the experienced craftsman. But the substantial genuineness of the record is beyond dispute ; and no book of the sort could have been more vivid, exciting, and manly.

Lord George, born in 1827, came of Wiltshire farming stock ; but his father, an admirable man, was pressed for the Navy, wounded at Trafalgar, and spent the rest of his industrious and virtuous life as a travelling showman with a peep-show. Sanger (contrary to public British belief) was not christened " Lord " and (contrary to Continental opinion) was not actually a peer or the son of one. As he told Queen Victoria, he assumed the title himself (to which the Queen graciously replied that he had " borne it very honourably "), and his reason was his annoyance that his American rival, Buffalo Bill, invading England, misled a simple populace by describing himself as " the Honourable William Cody." The young Sanger (whose early experiences might have given

THE SHOWMAN

Dickens a great deal of characteristic material) began to help his father at six. But he was a man of genius and a born captain of industry; and was only ten or so when, with tips he had saved up, he bought some canaries, redpolls, and mice and started a side line of his own. He began with these few birds and rodents, living slightly on the right side of the starvation line. He ended, having had no aid but that of his wife's and brothers' talents, as the greatest showman in the world, the owner of theatres, and of vast herds of elephants, camels, lions, and tigers, and an employer of labour on a very large scale. The career in itself is a romance, particularly set in such odd surroundings; but the man, decent, determined, inventive, enthusiastic, gives the book much of its attraction, and his gifts of description and expression happily matched his experience and his mind.

The book is not the ordinary record of success, though the hero's triumphs and misfortunes are amply, if modestly, displayed. It is primarily a record of vanished scenes and changing manners, by one who knew the people intimately and had penetrated almost every village in England at very long intervals. We begin almost with Fielding, and we end, as it were, with the *Daily Mail*; we begin with riots, body-snatchings, showmen's battles, hangings, transportations; the little boy who helped to arrange a model of William IV's funeral received in 1903 a cup from the present King. Everything Sanger saw he noticed. The reader of romance will find his

SUNDAY MORNINGS

record as exciting as any novel, and the social historian need not disdain it for its sidelights on the nineteenth century. The gullible should also appreciate it as a prophylactic. Sanger's stories of how giants may be faked, how Learned Pigs were taught, and how he made his great success with the Oyster which smoked a pipe, are too long to be quoted here; but they are most enlightening. What patience it must take to devise and perfect these harmless frauds! Sanger, otherwise very upright, never seems to have had ethical twinges about trickery of the showman's kind. He narrates his cheats with the same simple pride as he shows in his royal performances, and the solicitous letters he received from Queen Victoria about the health of his elephants. He had his code and lived by it; and died, poor old man, in his eighty-fourth year, battered by an axe in the hands of a mad manservant—an event the like of which, in his lifetime, would have prompted him to philosophic rumination on the uncertainties and injustices of life.

Mr. Kenneth Grahame's introduction is as pretty an essay as one could wish for, charmingly written and full of sentimental reminiscences which discloses an enviable sharpness both of observation and of memory. He knows the show-people well, birds who return to his country and retreat with the swallow; and he finds them, as Sanger's reminiscences also show them, a quiet and respectable tribe:—

They like the life for itself, not for its gains

THE SHOWMAN

and profits. They generally seem to have enough money, if not a great superfluity. Some people seem to have a vague idea of travelling show-folk as living in Rembrandt interiors on a Salvator Rosa background, in a scene of perpetual high lights and fuliginous shadows full of flashing eyes, tangled gipsy locks, dirt, confusion, clamour, and picturesqueness. They are instead a quiet and reserved people, subdued in manner, clannish, living a life apart; scrupulously clean and tidy, as indeed anyone must be who lives in a caravan; self-reliant, asking little from anyone except some tolerance from officials and freedom to come and go and offer their simple wares; and you rarely find a gipsy among them. They inter-marry among themselves, and are very proud of their descent from some bygone champion Sword-Swallower or Queen of the Tight Rope; success, if it comes to them, is but modest, reckoned in terms of money; failure means that they are down and out, and there will be no one waiting to help them, except perhaps their own folk.

Mr. Grahame remembers with extraordinary vividness the shows of his youth, and obviously watches the development of a very conservative, but still moving, institution, with a kindly eye. Discussing the zoology of roundabouts, he says that the horses are always the names of real horses, taken from an official stud-book; never mere invented names. The horse retains its pre-eminence over other beasts, though the "chairplane" threatens it, and the "motor car," with

SUNDAY MORNINGS

a steering wheel, has charms for the children :—

The English public is faithful in the main to horses, and does not greatly care to ride a bear or an ostrich. Pink pigs with blue ribbons round their necks, so popular in France, where the old roundabout will consist of placid pink pigs, I have never met in England, though there are few more pleasing sights than M. le Maire, M. le Notaire, and the rest of the principal inhabitants of a small French town, clad in straw hats, long black frock-coats, and yellow boots well turned up at the toes, gravely circling round, each on the back of the pinkest and shiniest of pigs.

In his youth he remembers that “giants, dwarfs, fat ladies, tattooed ladies, mermaids, six-legged calves, and distorted nature of every variety formed the background of the show. . . . The public taste no longer demands to be disgusted. It must be twenty years since I saw even so much as a fat lady, and that was far down in the West Country, where traditions linger and preferences die hard.” Well, I come from far down in the West Country, and my preferences die hard, though I confess that I never had any preference for six-legged calves and the like—perhaps I was the younger generation that came knocking at the door. But when I last saw a Fat Lady it was not in the primitive fastnesses of Devonshire, where traditions so obstinately linger; but at a fair in one of the progressive, pioneering, illuminated suburbs of London; and it was since the war.

THE SHOWMAN

A swarm of vans, roundabouts, swings, cocoanut shies, shooting-galleries, dart-ranges, switchbacks, mat-slides, and institutions (I know no other name) whereat you lose your money, with incredible rapidity, in the vain endeavour to throw rings or balls into the right squares or holes (being tempted by china cows and lustre candlesticks in argent, azure, and gules), had settled upon a waste place in my vicinity, and for a whole week made evening work, or even repose, impossible by the braying of its organs, the cracking of its shots, and the hubbub (as Shakespeare would have phrased it) of its multitudinous crowds incarnadine. One night, with a friend, I was lured by the flares of the naphtha, and went to my first fair for years. I, too, was struck by changes; for, like Mr. Grahame, I can remember shows whose disappearance is welcome—for instance, a show of the Armenian Massacres, with the most horrible paintings outside the booth. There were few freaks, but there *was* a Mermaid (your two-pence brought you the sight of a grinning girl's face and torso stuck impudently through a board on which a mermaid's remainder was painted), and there were actually two Fat Ladies. They were shown in a stuffy tent, which took a long time filling; time during which those present looked very sheepish. At last the back curtains parted and the gigantic forms of two mature women, dressed in the frocks of Victorian little girls, with blue sashes and shoulder ribbons and buckled white shoes, were revealed. The coyer was seated; she who had more aplomb stood

SUNDAY MORNINGS

smiling (whilst an attendant sold postcards of the group), and then briefly spoke. She generously devoted most of her remarks to the attributes of her alleged sister, but she concluded with a clincher. "My sister," she said, "is thirty-seven stone. *I* am thirty-nine"—a peroration as effective as any to which I have ever listened. The spectacle, when it came, was not so repellent as one had expected; the bulk was undeniable, but the faces were cheerful and pleasant. But what I should like to know from Mr. Grahame is this: what does the still young Fat Lady do when the public taste changes and she has to go out of business? She is an extreme instance of specialised talents at the mercy of fickle fashion and economic change. A slight alteration in the public taste, and years of hard eating are utterly thrown away.

February 21, 1926.

BARNUM

PHINEAS T. BARNUM, the proprietor of what used to be called "The Greatest Show on Earth," wrote his autobiography. Not only this (the extra qualification is necessary in an age of biographical "ghosts"), but he wrote his autobiography himself. Not only this, but he took vast trouble with it, was proud of it, rollicked in it, and published several successive editions, each substantially different from its predecessors. There was an edition in 1855, another in 1869, another in 1889; in fact, as Mr. Bryan says, the work has "a rather involved bibliographical history." In its day it had a vast vogue. At least a million copies of it were sold in one form or another:—

The book was got up with good paper, clear print, and wide margins; with narrow margins, poor paper, and diminished type. It was dressed in cloth of varying quality and divers hues; and it was clad in paper wrappers. It was sold through the trade; by subscription—in a volume weighing three pounds and a half; and by gentlemanly agents in the tents of the Great Show. It was touted in the circus programmes and in a "Card Introductory" prefixed to the work itself. When King Kalakaua of Hawaii was entertained by a gala performance of the circus in Madison Square Garden his

SUNDAY MORNINGS

host made the circuit of the arena in an open carriage with the dusky monarch, upon whom had already been bestowed the Christmas gift of a specially-bound presentation copy of the host's autobiography.

All over the civilised world it went. Even in Russia, in the middle of the last century, it was reviewed by Alexander Herzen and praised by Turgenev. Yet for some time it has been out of print. The error has now been rectified in the handsomest possible manner. Mr. Bryan has not been satisfied with a mere mechanical reprint of one edition or another. He has approached his subject with the devotion and industry of a scholar presented with a variety of authorities for a classical text, for all the world as though he were dealing with codices dug up in Athos and the Thebaid, or a variety of monastic manuscripts of "The Canterbury Tales." Barnum Alpha is best on the early years, Barnum Beta and Gamma are valuable for certain periods, but defective where Alpha is strong. All the variants have been assembled, and a composite text constructed with a full paraphernalia of introductions, bibliography, and appendices. Two huge volumes are the result, and if few people will read solidly through both, at least it may be admitted that they are more entertaining than most two-volume Lives of public characters.

Barnum was born in 1810 and died, one of the most celebrated men in the world, in 1891. His early years were spent in Connecticut, and before he became a showman he was a clerk in a store,

BARNUM:

an editor, a lottery agent, and a temperance propagandist. He was five-and-twenty and in New York when, having "long fancied that I could succeed if I could only get hold of a public exhibition," he entered upon negotiations with the proprietor of the great Hydro-Oxygen Microscope, "the most extraordinary instrument now extant." Barnum had no money, and doubted the value of the instrument, so he fell back temporarily upon a boarding-house and a grocery store :—

By this time it was clear to my mind that my proper position in this busy world was not yet reached. I had displayed the faculty of getting money, as well as getting rid of it ; but the business for which I was destined and, I believe, made, had not yet come to me ; or rather, I had not found that I was to cater for that insatiate want of human nature—the love of amusement. . . . This is a trading world, and men, women, and children, who cannot live on gravity alone, need something to satisfy their gayer, lighter moods and hours, and he who ministers to this want is in a business established by the Author of our nature.

He was conscious of the call ; soon he came upon a field for his labours. He met a man who "owned an interest" in a negro woman believed to be one hundred and sixty-one years old, and the nurse of George Washington. The proposition seemed good, and Barnum went to inspect the exhibit :—

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SUNDAY MORNINGS

of the old woman. So far as outward indications were concerned, she might almost as well have been called a thousand years old as any other age. She was lying upon a high lounge in the middle of the room; her lower extremities were drawn up with her knees elevated some two feet above the top of the lounge. She was apparently in good health and spirits, but former disease or old age, or perhaps both combined, had rendered her unable to change her position; in fact, although she could move one of her arms at will, her lower limbs were fixed in their position, and could not be straightened. She was totally blind, and her eyes were so deeply sunken in their sockets that the eyeballs seemed to have disappeared altogether. She had no teeth, but possessed a head of thick, bushy, grey hair. Her left arm lay across her breast, and she had no power to remove it. The fingers of her left hand were drawn down so as nearly to close it, and remained fixed and immovable. The nails upon that hand were about four inches in length, and extended above her wrist. The nails upon her large toes also had grown to the thickness of nearly a quarter of an inch.

What would be better calculated to promote the innocent amusement of mankind? Barnum sold out of the grocery, went to Philadelphia with the money, and received a document stating that the negress's proprietor by these presents did

bargain, sell, transfer, and deliver unto the said Phineas T. Barnum, his executors, administrators, or assigns, the possession of the person

BARNUM

of the African woman, Joice Heth, and the sole right of exhibiting her during the unexpired term of the twelve months mentioned in the agreement dated June 10th, A.D. 1835, in and amongst the cities of the United States.

She was a great success. When things flagged Barnum pseudonymously wrote in a newspaper saying that Joice was only a ventriloquist's dummy, and the public swarmed in again to see if they had been humbugged. They had; but not in that way. Barnum was a marvellous "publicity man," or practical psychologist. He was far from being above swindles, and if people believed him when he said that he was showing a Mermaid he consoled himself by the reflection that they were amused and no harm was done. But as his show grew "fakes" became the less important part in it, and his genius showed itself partly in giving people what they wanted, and partly in trumpeting his wares in such a manner as to compel them to come whether they really wanted to or not. He had the showman's "Walk-up, walk-up" patter *in excelsis*; his gift for expression showed itself in small things as in large, in his floridly boastful manifestoes to the world, as in his fertility of nomenclature. What an instinct it was that made him resuscitate for his first dwarf the name of Tom Thumb and invent for his second that of Commodore Nutt!

All through the Victorian era his processions plared their way, with their genial, jocular, quick-eyed general at their head, along the roads of two continents. The calliopes brayed, the lions

SUNDAY MORNINGS

roared, the hordes of elephants lumbered along beneath gaudy trappings, the whips cracked in the great rings, the trapezists stood at attention when Barnum came in sight, the assorted freaks saw their pictures in every newspaper. Parliament interfered when the beautiful Zazel was fired from a cannon, and when the Zoo sold Jumbo to Barnum we came nearer to a serious dispute with America than we had since the Alabama question. Persons of my generation still remember how their nurses used to croon to them an affecting stanza in which Britain's grief at Jumbo's departure was recorded :—

Jumbo said to Alice, " I love you."

Alice said to Jumbo, " I don't believe you do ;
For if you really love me, and what you say
is true,

You wouldn't go to Yankee-land and leave me
in the Zoo."

A later memory is that of the record assemblage of Freaks, soon after Barnum's death, and that, in retrospect, seems very disgusting. Three-legged cows, sham mermaids, and fat ladies may still be seen complacently showing their charms in little booths at country fairs. But we have passed the days when the wholesale exhibition of distressing deformities seemed a natural entertainment to offer in the largest metropolitan arenas. Personalities like Barnum are rare ; and our public amusements have lost in gusto, though they have gained in refinement ; but the passing of his glorified Jarleyism cannot be regretted.

BARNUM

Meanwhile, here is the record of it : a book indescribably amusing, crowded with vivid scenes and good jokes, and revealing a personality which, in its mixture of guile and innocence, greed and generosity, religion and cant, genius and short-sightedness, has an Elizabethan richness.

July 31, 1927.

WEBSTER

THE reproach that we do not competently edit our own classics cannot be so easily levelled against us as it could twenty years ago. One by one the Restoration writers and the lesser Elizabethans are being competently edited; and the time is in sight when the serried ranks of editors will have to move on from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and tackle later authors, from Nat Lee onwards. Webster was edited, very well, by the always competent Dyce; then, seventy years ago, by the fertile but slipshod Carew Hazlitt. The editions were not complete; knowledge has advanced; a definitive edition was needed; it has now been supplied. Mr. Lucas, in his new four-volume edition of the *Complete Works*, includes all that is known to be by Webster, and all in which any rational person supposes Webster to have a considerable hand. He gives a full critical introduction to every composition, and (over and above purely textual notes) a commentary which could not be bettered. Wherever I happened to think of a parallel passage or to possess a little recondite information, I found, on reference to the notes, that he was not to be "caught out." Enormous labour, as well as great good sense, has gone to the making of these notes. And, what is rarer, they are invariably readable. Such a burden of research

WEBSTER

might have crushed the soul out of any man. But Mr. Lucas, obstinately forging his way through the obscurest passages in the most disputable plays, hunting for derivations in the kennels of Elizabethan literature, and for hypotheses in the kennels of German criticism, was never overwhelmed by the mechanics of his task. His commentary is always terse, efficient, and pungent; his most "scholarly" notes are always liable to contain jokes or sly oblique references. If all editions of Elizabethan dramatists were at once as competent and as vivacious as this, I should not get tired of editions of Elizabethan dramatists. And the vivacity never degenerates into mere smartness. Nothing is jeered at which does not deserve it, and Mr. Lucas is especially generous in his acknowledgments of debt to his predecessors in this field. His references to Rupert Brooke—a Fellow of his own College—are particularly graceful: for Brooke's thesis on Webster might have been less tenderly treated by a pedant who did not remember that it was the easy debonair excursion of a young poet invading a difficult field of scholarship with less than a pedant's equipment of knowledge and assiduity, but with more than a pedant's equipment of intuition.

The volumes contain Webster's two "great tragedies"—"The Duchess of Malfi" and "The White Devil"—"The Devil's Law-Case" (an undisputed comedy), "A Cure for a Cuckold" (written with Rowley), "Anything for a Quiet Life" (probably a collaboration with Middleton),

SUNDAY MORNINGS

"The Fair Maid of the Inn" (probably written with Massinger and Ford), "Appius and Virginia" (probably written with Heywood), some occasional poems, and thirty-two of the "Characters" attributed to Overbury.

These thirty-two all appeared in later editions of the *Characters*: the book had been a success, and the publisher presumably thought that enlargement might make it a greater success. The parallels between these prose sketches and Webster's two celebrated tragedies were first pointed out in 1913 by Mr. H. D. Sykes, who erroneously assumed that Webster must be the borrower. A little later Baron A. F. Bourgeois argued that Webster had written the thirty-two characters himself. Mr. Sykes was, in large measure, converted, and Mr. Lucas is in entire agreement with Bourgeois. The matter is not insignificant, as some of these Theophrastic "characters" are very charming. They include the famous description of "A fayre and happy Milke-mayd":—

. . . Her breath is her owne, which sends all the yeere long of June, like a new-made Hay-cocke. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft with pittie: and when winter evenings fall early (sitting at her merry wheele) she sings a defiance to the giddy Wheele of Fortune. Shee doth all things with so sweet a grace, it seems ignorance will not suffer her to doe ill, being her minde is to do well. She bestowes her yeere's wages at next Faire; and in choosing her Garments counts no bravery

i' th' worlde like decency. The Garden and Bee-hive are all her Physicke and Chyrurgery, and she lives the longer for't. She dare goe alone, and unfold sheepe i' th' night, and feares no manner of ill, because she means none : yet to say truth, she is never alone, for she is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones ; yet they have their efficacy, in that they are not paueled with insuing idle cogitations. Lastly, her dreames are so chaste that she dare not tell them : only a Frydaye's dreame is all her superstition : that shee conceales for feare of anger. Thus lives she, and all her care is. She may dye in the Spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheete.

This charming piece of Arcadianism, in the vein of a Walton or a Chalkhill, is an agreeable addition to the works of the author of *The White Devil*. The characters now attributed to him are worth all the doubtful and most of the lesser plays put together.

Mr. Lucas himself has little to say on behalf of "Anything for a Quiet Life." What he does say is : "It would have given me great pleasure to suppress this play : it has certainly given me no pleasure to edit it." He thinks better of "The Fair Maid of the Inn," though here the best things are unlikely to be Webster's. Of "A Cure for a Cuckold" he rightly remarks that it is "frivolous without light-heartedness and vulgar without vitality" ; of "The Devil's Law-Case" (the absurdity of which is partly redeemed

SUNDAY MORNINGS

by a first-rate court-scene) he observes, "life is short and human patience; not many will read this play a second time." There remain "Appius and Virginia," "The Duchess of Malfi," and "The White Devil," and these contain all Webster's best.

Mr. Lucas gives us some very good argument in connection with "Appius and Virginia," a comparatively orthodox and dignified classical tragedy on the well-known theme. Controversy has raged over two main issues: its date and its authorship. The dates assigned range from 1603 to 1634—by which time, for all we know to the contrary, Webster may have been dead. Mr. Lucas, on metrical grounds, convincingly argues that it must have come either at the beginning or at the end of Webster's career. Mr. Sykes has already suggested that a date nearer 1630 is likely because of the visible influence of Heywood's Latinised style, and the absence of paraphrases from Montaigne and Sidney, which are astonishingly conspicuous in Webster's early tragedies. Mr. Lucas reinforces the case for a late ascription by a study of topical allusions, and concludes that the likeliest date is 1625-27. His discussion about the question of authorship, which has been freely canvassed since Rupert Brooke light-heartedly ascribed the whole play to Heywood (with possible touches by Webster), is one of the soundest chapters in the whole four volumes. The collaboration of the two men seems to me to be completely demonstrated. The positive evidence for Webster, Mr. Lucas, as a scholar

WEBSTER

must, bases chiefly upon words and parallel passages. Before looking at his results I read the play looking only for the accents of Webster's spirit and speech. I find that I agree with him about almost all the scenes, though I think that there is a little Heywood in V. 1, and a little Webster in V. 2. More than half the play is, I think, Webster's; anybody who has ever written a play in collaboration will realise how hopeless is the quest of scholars who hope to find that a play written by two people may be neatly subdivided into scenes written by one and scenes written by the other—an error into which Mr. Lucas does not fall.

"Appius and Virginia" is undoubtedly the neatest of Webster's plays; only those who are shocked by gross horrors or deaf to great poetry could maintain it to be his best. About his best, opinions have differed; some have talked of "The Duchess of Malfi" as a great tragedy, some have treated it as a festering extravaganza of torture and gloom. Mr. Lucas is of the former party; he is what one might call a White Devil's Advocate. He rather airily dismisses certain faults of construction by saying that "Webster did not think of such trifles; neither did his audience," supporting himself by quoting a minor flaw in *Hamlet*, which was based on an older play and is immeasurably more coherent and convincing than either of Webster's two "great plays." We should, he says, in approaching an Elizabethan, be "cavalier about his plots"; all the audience wanted was exciting situations; it

SUNDAY MORNINGS

thought in scenes. This is pushed too far ; even the Elizabethans were not devoid of memory, and there are fundamental canons which apply to all plays and have never been better vindicated than by Shakespeare in his best work. Webster's constant failure to produce " characters " he scarcely glances at. He is preoccupied with the fact that Webster did splendidly do one thing on the stage : exhibit bravery, whether Vittoria's or the Duchess's, in the face of doom. The great passages of pessimism and defiance ring in his ears : and in recollection he thinks of them as pervading the whole play.

They did not. Webster rose to magnificent heights of poetic utterance. His great passages and lines are very familiar :

Cover her face : Mine eyes dazzle :
and : she di'd young,

My soule, like to a ship in a blacke storme,
Is driven I know not whither.

He could, with a fierce vigour like Donne's, make us shudder by a single exclamation ; he coined at moments perfect phrases like, " a face folded in sorrow." He had, in his two best plays, a power of laconic dramatic dialogue, carrying its own stage directions in its very substance, unmatched outside of Shakespeare. There is the haunted Ferdinand after the murder :

Ferd. : Leave me.

Mal.: Why doth your Lordship love this
solitariness?

WEBSTER

Ferd. : Eagles commonly fly alone ! They are
Crows, Dawes, and Sterlings that flocke
together : Looke, what's that, followes
me ?

Mal. : Nothing, my Lord.

Ferd. : Yes.

Mal. : 'Tis your shadow.

Ferd. : Stay it, let it not haunt me.

Mal. : Impossible ; if you move, and the Sun
shine :

Ferd. : I will throttle it.

In quotation, however, he is always greater than in bulk : and his reputation is largely based on quotations, which swell and swell in the imagination after one has laid his works down. The tragedies, while the music of these lines and the terror of these moments dominate our minds, seem better than they were ; and, choosing but these best things to remember and exhibit, we tend to form an unjustifiable picture of their author.

We know next to nothing of Webster : his father may have been one of many tailors or tallow-chandlers ; we are ignorant of his birth and of his death. The tigerish fight of Vittoria, the beautiful and pathetic bravery of the Duchess, the frequent splendour of lines referring to life's fitful fever and the undiscovered bourn (not monopolies of Webster), result in hypothetical pictures of Webster which may have had no foundation in fact, and an imaginary dispersal of sombre magnificence through two tragedies which are very weak except at their great moments.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Webster's imagination was at one time fired by the contemplation of life's cruelty and death's mystery: need he, in fact, have been more brooding, morose, and monomaniac than the poet who wrote "Lear" and "Troilus and Cressida," but also invented Falstaff and had to be suppressed for volubility at the Mermaid. The quality of the poetic imagination is not always an index of the man as he walks and talks; and with the great Websterian passages there is mingled a great deal of melodramatic fustian which may have been as cheerfully supplied for audiences that wanted it as are the shockers of to-day. Certainly, when one considers his work as a whole, it seems to be forcing things to presume (as Mr. Lucas seems to presume) a brief period during which Webster was acutely sensitive and weighed down by the woes of mankind, and a remainder of existence during which he had contrived to make terms with life, being unable any longer to sustain "the burden and the weight." Let me not, however, end on a note of disputation, but on one of compliment to an editor whose future works promise to contribute much both to the edification and to the amusement of mankind.

February 12, 1928.

BEN JONSON

THESE are the first two volumes of a Jonson encyclopædia. Eight more, mainly devoted to a new edition of his plays and poems, are to follow. In these we are given a Life, the extant documents which have assisted the writing of his Life (including a full reprint of the Conversations with Drummond), and a series of exhaustive introductions to the several plays. A consideration of these very interesting and learned papers may be postponed until the appearance of the other volumes, which will certainly supersede all previous editions. Meanwhile we are in possession of a biography, annotated with an almost Chinese thoroughness, which supersedes all previous biographies. This, from Professor Herford and Mr. Percy Simpson, who has for many years been "specialising" in Jonson, was only to be expected.

The book contains certain new documents; more, perhaps, than might reasonably be hoped for at this date. There are three new letters respecting the *Eastward Ho* imprisonment, from the collection of Mr. W. A. White of New York. There is a Deed of Assignment of 1621 whereunder Jonson assigned a half-year's annuity (from his Pension from the King) to John Hull, whom he owed £36. These have never been printed before; there are other documents which have appeared

SUNDAY MORNINGS

only in newspapers ; and there is, what must rank as a new document, a complete list, with notes, of all the traceable books from Jonson's large library. Many survive, in spite of the ravages of Vulcan, against whose exploits the poet so loudly protested ; how far the editors have been successful in distinguishing between the genuine and the forged Jonson signatures on title-pages I do not know ; I have often heard that forgeries are numerous. None of the new " facts " is perhaps of the first importance : the chief merit of the " life " lies in the vividness and sense with which facts already known are presented.

Jonson's figure emerges very clearly. There is character in everything he did and everything that happened to him. He was a Border minister's son. His father died early, his mother married a master-bricklayer : in Ben's character the Scots divine and the bricklayer may both be traced as contributory influences. Ben went to Westminster and laid the foundations of his vast classical knowledge under Camden. He then became a bricklayer (as his enemies frequently reminded him in later life), and is alleged to have worked on the buildings at Lincoln's Inn. Fuller, unconfirmed, states that he went to St. John's College at Cambridge for a short while : after which the money gave out. As a member of that foundation I have always hoped that this was true ; Messrs. Herford and Simpson are categorical in their denial of it. It was as a stranger that Ben in later life was made an Hon. M.A. of both Cambridge and Oxford.

BEN JONSON

The years of his early manhood were certainly troubled. He fought in the Low Countries, and killed an enemy in single combat between the lines, taking "spolia opima" from him. Back in London in his early playwriting days he several times got into serious difficulties. He was imprisoned in 1597 for his share in "The Isle of Dogs." In 1598 he was indicted for killing the actor, Gabriel Spencer, in self-defence, forfeited his goods and was branded on the thumb. In 1605 he was in trouble over *Eastward Ho*, which contained low jokes about the Scotch. In 1606 he was cited for recusancy as "a poet" who "is by fame a seducer of youthe to ye popishe Religion." Turbulent in manner he always remained, but time brought him fame, honour, and tolerance. He became Poet Laureate, with a pension and a royal allowance of Canary (always the chief inspirer of his Muse); he was on intimate terms with many great persons at court; he was City Chronologer; he was a close friend of the most learned persons of his time; he was the acknowledged king of the theatre; and, at the Devil, the Sun, and other taverns, he reigned unchallenged over the younger poets, encouraging and helping the deferential, crushing the rebellious with his great voice and his mutton-fist, an old man with a blotched face, flashing eyes, a grey beard, and a "mountain belly," who combined the personal habits of a Falstaff with the learning of a Scaliger and the lyricism, occasionally peeping out, of a Herrick.

There is quite enough material for a convincing

SUNDAY MORNINGS

novel about him. We see him in many aspects ; we know every accent of his voice. And if there be one episode in his career which more strikingly than another exhibits both the originality of his character and the affectionate reverence with which that original character was cherished by his contemporaries, it is his trip to Scotland in 1618. In Scotland he stayed with Drummond ; he was made a freeman of Edinburgh ; he was given by the City a dinner which cost what was then a very large sum. In the Archives there is a paper which " ordanis the thesaurer to pay to James ainslie Laite baillie twa hundredth twentie ane pund sex schillingis four pennyis debursit be him upon the denner maid to Benjamin Johnston." He had, in fact, the sort of civic reception then normally given only to princes, and that even now is never given to poets. But he had walked to Scotland. He was forty-six and immensely fat ; but he walked all the way by the North Road. drinking with the yokels as he went, and buying a new pair of shoes at Darlington. This is what justifies " O rare Ben Jonson " ; it was the same man who, in the presence of King James, bracketed his Majesty's good health with that of " Ralph " ; and when the King asked him who " this Ralph " was, told him " 'twas the Drawer at the Swanne taverne by Charing Crosse who drew him good Canarie." " For this drollery," we are further informed, " his Matie. gave him an hundred poundes."

Jonson was a very great figure, a man of prodigious learning and powers. Even the worst of

BEN JONSON

his works may be read with interest ; he left some plays which are still occasionally revived ; he wrote some of the most exquisite lyrics in all our annals ; and the life and personality of the man make an even more fascinating study than his writings. We have far more information about him than we have about any English poet earlier than Milton. We are familiar with his face ; in many pages of first-hand transcripts of his conversation we can catch the very tone of his lusty voice ; we know him so well that we could conjecture with some plausibility what he would, when well-primed and in the full swing of his typical mood, have replied to almost any remark which might have been made to him. In a slightly cloudier way we can see him, hear him, and know him as we see, hear, and know his later namesake, Samuel. This life and this edition of his works, will be valued for generations by scholars and by lovers of literature.

Yet, in thinking over Ben's gifts, over the comparative fullness of his biography, over our acquaintance with his rich personality, one cannot resist a peculiar thought. We should lose greatly by the disappearance of Ben's songs, of " The Sad Shepherdess," of " The Alchemist," of " Volpone," of " Bartholomew Fair " even, with its racy recreation of common Elizabethan life. We should be much the poorer, too, were the records of his actions, speech, appearance, and opinions lost. Yet the gulf between him and another is realised when one puts to oneself the question, fantastic but illuminating, whether one would not

SUNDAY MORNINGS

sacrifice it all rather than lose his few references to Shakespeare. "Gentle Shakespeare" is his; "He was not for an age but for all time" is his; so is the commentary on Basse's suggestion about the burial near Chaucer, Spenser, and Beaumont. As one of the editors remarks, "Of the specific quality of Shakespeare's genius Jonson perhaps understood less than many of his brother poets and dramatists; but the true magnitude of the 'Starre of Poets' in the firmament of universal literature he was the first clearly to proclaim." He said that Shakespeare "wanted art"; but that from Jonson meant no more than that Shakespeare, in his opinion, did not reinforce his natural genius with a sufficiency of pains. It is enough that, though autocratic to a degree and very reluctant to admit a rival near the throne, he praised Shakespeare in terms that he never applied to another, and acknowledged him the peer of the greatest that ever were. And it is to him that we owe what is as near a personal glimpse of Shakespeare as we get anywhere. He was talking of the conversations at the Mermaid; and he said that Shakespeare, on occasion, got so voluble and vivacious that he had to be sat upon, suppressed. "Sufflaminandus erat": it confirms the later rumour of verbal duels between these two, in which Ben was the lumbering Spanish galleon and Shakespeare the light English ship.

Here we are, by an extraordinary irony, with a multitude of facts about the lesser writer and virtually nothing at all about the greater. Little

BEN JONSON

did Jonson, for all his generous praise of a man whom he deemed inferior only to himself, realise that he would have put all posterity incalculably in his debt, and impressed his own memory upon it as he has never done by his plays, had he but spent one of those evenings with Drummond at Hawthornden talking solely about Shakespeare, furnishing the note-taker with all that he could give, of biographical information, of personal anecdote, of criticism, and of explanation. For all we know he did tell Drummond much more than Drummond recorded. To Drummond, the erudite, the refined, the poetically Gallicised, it may have been all one. Higgledy-piggledy, without discrimination, down it went :—

Spencer's stanzas pleased him not, nor his matter.

Samuel Daniel was a good honest Man, had no children, bot no poet.

That Done for not keeping of accent deserved hanging.

That Shaksperc wanted Arte.

That Sharpham, Day, Dicker were all Rogues and that Minshew was one.

That Abram Francis in his English Hexameters was a Foole.

That next himself only Fletcher and Chapman could make a Mask.

He cursed Petrarch for redacting Verses to Sonnets.

"Dicker" was Dekker; but had that sentence, admirably though it illustrates Jonson's sweeping

SUNDAY MORNINGS

manner of speech, been replaced by one more about Shakespeare, we would willingly have spared a great deal. Here were the two necessary men together: the Poet who had been Shakespeare's companion, and the minor Poet who catechised his English friend about all and sundry, and dryly registered his answers. They might between them have furnished us with all we need. They were silent, or they did not realise: the result is that we have to cling pathetically to a couple of entries in the Stratford registers, to a few signatures and "mentions" in legal documents, to a few casual criticisms in obscure books, and vainly attempt to read some intelligence into the Droeshout portrait and the fat-faced bust over the tablet in the chancel of Stratford Church.

One small thing more must be commented on. Here we have the first volumes of what is bound to be both the standard life of Jonson and the standard edition of his works. Two devoted scholars have for many years occupied their leisure with the work, examining Jonson's voluminous writings with minute attention, searching numerous archives in the hope of finding some small additions to our knowledge of the great age of our theatre, travelling from library to library to read rare volumes, corresponding extensively with the learned and the owners of libraries in order to give their labours the last possible finish. "It remains," they conclude their preface, "to acknowledge the help we have received." Thereafter comes a long list of those who have co-operated. But:—

BEN JONSON

One collector in America, who owns an unprinted letter of Jonson, has refused to answer an inquiry about it ; one collector in England has withheld a manuscript note of a contemporary of Jonson giving a new fact about his life.

It does seem a pity that men should act thus contemptibly and that editors should feel obliged to screen them : it is felt, I suppose, that the adoption of a franker custom would mean that the request of a favour from a collector would embody an implied menace. Yet how richly do these men deserve public odium. There sits the American. He has bought a letter written by Jonson. To him its value does not lie in the fact that it may add to the world's knowledge and understanding of a great writer, nor in any veneration he can feel for Jonson. No ; his pleasure arises solely from the possession of something that other people want to see and the ability to refuse them satisfaction ; he would hoard all literature if he could ; and his loveliest dream of happiness would be to lie in his manger on an unpublished play by Shakespeare. The English collector is certainly as repulsive a case and even stranger ; for the monetary value of his manuscript sounds very small. This precious pair of misers, with whom Jonson himself would have made lusty play, being a connoisseur of the meaner egoisms, are not unique. There is the classic case of the bibliophile or book-lover of early Victorian days, recorded by John Hill Burton, who bought up every copy that he en-

SUNDAY MORNINGS

countered of a certain rare book, and destroyed every specimen except the best in order to appreciate the value of his property. In a world which should correct the errors of this one, the two of them would be set up in pillories outside their own libraries and pelted with the heaviest, and the most valuable, folios from their own shelves. Afterwards they would be imprisoned and compelled to read their books, and not be released until they had passed an examination on their contents. Think upon them, reader, and regard with awe the bottomless abysses of human nature.

July 9, 1925.

TENDER OTWAY

ONCE more the Nonesuch Press must be commended for a very remarkable production. As a rule these presses which minister to the craving for fine reprints, make few attempts to perform services to scholarship; as a rule, also, they are bound to overcharge for their books, since they issue them in such small editions. The directors of the Nonesuch avoid both errors. A considerable number of their books are standard editions of authors whose texts have never been satisfactorily edited, or completely collected, before. And the prices of them are always lower than the experienced observer would expect. This is made feasible by the bold policy of limiting the editions, but limiting them less severely than is the custom. Of the *Otway*, for instance, there are 1,250 sets, as well as 90 of a special and more expensive kind. Even at that it is difficult to see how it can be done at two guineas.

The edition of *Otway*, like its predecessors of Congreve, Wycherley, and Rochester, puts all previous editions out of court, not merely by virtue of its "new material," but because of the fullness of its critical apparatus. How full this is will be immediately guessed by anyone familiar with the previous operations of Mr. Montague Summers, who first showed his mettle in a six-volume edition of Mrs. Behn for the late Arthur

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Bullen's Press. Mr. Summers, as an editor, is an extraordinary combination of energy and patience, accuracy and gusto. His knowledge (and it is not restricted to his period) is astonishing. It is as though in early youth he had plunged into the jungle of the seventeenth century literary undergrowth, disappearing for years as solitary explorers do in the forests of the Upper Amazon, and then returned with a unique knowledge of the humblest flora and fauna, ready and willing to inform the curious and violently contradict the partially informed. Very little stimulus is required to make him impart what he knows: his difficulty, once begun, is to stop. The introduction to *Otway* is prodigiously different from the normal editorial introduction. All the usual things are there: an account of *Otway's* life, summaries of his plays and their reception and subsequent reputation, and the necessary facts about the text. But how much else! What expansiveness about the most trivial details! What digressions! Never did an author change foxes so gaily or with such an assurance that the field would cheerfully follow him wherever he went. He knows as much about Elkanah Settle and Mr. Howard as the ordinary professor knows about Dryden, and what he knows he tells. If a forgotten English dramatist took a small notion from a forgotten French novelist, that is quite enough for him to give us a full account of the Frenchman and all his relations. The fact that *Otway* wrote a play about Don Carlos is ample excuse for a dissertation on King Philip and his

TENDER OTWAY

son, and another on all the plays about Don Carlos which have been written in various ages and countries.

Equally surprising to those unacquainted with Mr. Summers' proclivities, but very useful to students of our theatrical history, are his exhaustive excursions into thespian biography. Not only the stars but the actors with walking-on parts are traced, as far as is possible, through their professional and private lives. The Montague Summers of 2127 A.D., should the portent recur, will have at his fingers' ends all the facts about *Interference*, *The Ringer*, and *Rose Marie*, and their authors; and no secrets will be hid from him concerning the lives, not merely of such notable performers as Sir Gerald du Maurier and Mr. Billy Merson, but of all the humbler butlers, crooks, and chorus-girls whose names their contemporaries callously overlook.

But who could mind? Mr. Summers's enthusiasm and raciness are such that he could impart life to a time table. When I ended these volumes I felt that, profane though it may sound, I had rather read another hundred pages of Mr. Summers than another hundred pages of Otway, unless the dramatist were to be at his very best. Mr. Summers pours out cascades of facts from his great horn of plenty with unfailing gusto and pugnacity, exaggerating the merits of his hero, vigorously thumping everybody he dislikes, notably persons who dislike excessive "frankness" on the stage and persons who differ from him about the merits of the Restoration drama-

SUNDAY MORNINGS

tists. Express the least doubt about the perfect dramatic construction of *The Orphan* and you are a ninny and an ignoramus ; shrink from the grossness of *Friendship in Fashion*, and you are a mealy-mouthed prig. His vast introduction, spattered all over with rare and even unknown words, roars on like a Bacchic procession, with Tom, Jerry, and Friar John of the Funnels at the head of it. For Mr. Summers is both Corinthian and Rabelaisian ; his exuberance is as notable as his erudition : and for all his eccentricities of judgment and taste one would not have him otherwise. He writes about Otway as though Otway were Dryden ; how he would write about Shakespeare baffles the imagination.

Thomas Otway was born at Trotton, in Sussex, in March, 1651-2, the son of the rector. He went to Winchester and thence, in 1669, to Oxford. Next year his father died ; and it is at least arguable that Otway came down at once and made his unsuccessful attempt to be an actor—though Mr. Summers (on the basis of a reference to Lord Falkland that might as well apply to a Winchester friendship as to an Oxford one) keeps Otway at Oxford for several years more, and is consequently bound to hypothesize that he acted in London when an undergraduate, and that he was supported by a private benefactor. His first play, *Alcibiades*, was produced at Covent Garden in 1675 ; nine others followed, including some adaptations from the French ; *The Soldier's Fortune* was staged in 1680, and *Venice Preserved* in February, 1681-2. In 1685 Otway died a

TENDER OTWAY

pauper in a squalid tavern, after a period of great vicissitudes. He was taken up, and then dropped, by Rochester; for a time he was tutor to Nell Gwyn's eldest son. His plays were rapidly and adequately produced, and (if dedications be evidence) he had a succession of important patrons. But just as, underneath the bombast of the heroic tragedies and the flippancies of the comedies which he wrote in the manner of the time, a strong personal cry is to be heard, so in his life he could not make terms with the world around him. His life appears to have been ruined by a corroding passion for Rochester's mistress, Mrs. Barry, an actress as cold off the stage as she was ardent on it, a heartless wanton who enjoyed keeping him fascinated whilst refusing to give him more encouragement than was necessary to do that. A few of his letters to her are preserved. "Since the first day I saw you," he writes,

I have hardly enjoy'd one hour of perfect quiet. . . . With stubborn sufferance, I resolv'd to bear, and brave your power: nay, did it often too, successfully. Generally with wine or conversation I diverted and appeas'd the demon that possess'd me; but when at night, returning to my unhappy self, to give my heart an account why I had done it so unnatural a violence, it was then I always paid a treble interest for the short moments of ease, which I had borrow'd; then every treacherous thought rose up, and took your part, nor left me till they had thrown me on my bed, and open'd those sluices of tears, that were to run

SUNDAY MORNINGS

till morning. This has been for some years my best condition.

The accents of feverish obsession are in these letters ; they remind one of the *Liber Amoris* ; the situation, with Rochester in the background, has a touch of the extravagance, even grotesqueness, of the heroic tragedies themselves. The passion ruined him, though ; it drove him into the army and abroad (thus giving us *The Soldier's Fortune*), and in the end its consequences probably killed him.

Certain of his plays held the stage for generations. *Pace* Mr. Summers, they are no more likely to come back than *The Mourning Bride*. An occasional revival of *Venice Preserv'd* for single performances is certain, and is desirable ; however well it may be acted, nothing could restore life to the *Orphan*, and not all Mr. Summers's plaudits will make of *Friendship in Fashion* (in spite of Lady Squeamish and Sir Noble Clumsey) a play as well constructed and racy as Wycherley's, much less Congreve's. We may speculate as to what would have happened to Otway in another age. Temperamentally he was an Elizabethan born out of time, and there was a good poet buried in him. He did the best things best (the actresses liked him because he gave them great moments) ; his *Poet's Complaint of the Muse* has passages of simple nature, rare in that age outside Flaxman and Cotton ; the verse in his plays is notably speakable, and in the best passages has a simplicity and melody

TENDER OTWAY

which vies with the best of Dryden's. Even the juvenile couplets of *Alcibiades* have a rare flow. Take this on death, from a girl about to die :—

Yes, 'tis to lay these clogs our bodys by,
And be remov'd to blest eternity.
By death relief from all our griefs we gain,
And by one put an end to years of pain ;
By that we in one minute find out more,
Than all the busie gown men study for ;
Who after in dull search th'ave ages spent,
Learn nothing but to know th'are ignorant.

This is from a play whose plot is worthy of Tourneur, an absurd, ranting thing, where all sense of probability is washed away in the sea of blood. The epilogue opens impudently with :—

Now who sayes Poets don't in blood delight.

Who can conceive Shakespeare arranging to have that line spoken just after the curtain of *Othello* has fallen ? It marks the gulf between tragedy and heroic tragedy ; a gulf which Otway (still only thirty) almost crossed in *Venice Preserv'd*, which has serious dramatic flaws, but is full of poignant and powerful scenes. But when men say, plausibly, that it is the finest English tragedy since Ford and Webster, it merely illustrates the paucity of great tragedies. After all, there are very few in the world : the dramatic classics of all time are but a handful.

A hundred editions will not bring Otway back to the stage ; students, for generations, however,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

will be grateful to Mr. Summers. He has produced a sound text for the first time ; he has rescued several " new poems " ; and he has printed, with a glutton's banquet of explanation, all that Otway ever published. There is one exception : Otway's translation of a French *History of the Triumvirates*. He simply could not bring himself to do this. I cannot, much as I generally dislike incomplete editions, find it in my heart to blame him. Whether anybody else but he and Sir Edmund Gosse and myself has read it, I doubt. But I once rashly bought a copy ; having bought it I had to read it ; when I had read it there was nothing to do but sell it.

March 6, 1927.

CONGREVE

CONGREVE is the greatest of our pure comic dramatists. He has been dead two hundred years. Yet, strangely, the new Nonesuch edition is not only the first complete edition of his works, but the first attempt at such an edition. The five chief plays and some of the poems have often been reprinted, and almost as often mutilated. The opera *Semele* and the masque *The Judgment of Paris* appear in some of the old editions, but the farce, *Squire Trelooby*, of which Congreve wrote one act, has never been included in any edition of his works until this. Mr. Summers has also reprinted the early novel, *Incognita* (recently separately edited by Mr. Brett-Smith), the reply to Jeremy Collier, the letter on Humour, Congreve's correspondence (some of it new), and the whole of the poems, some of them brought together for the first time. Every word that Congreve is known to have written is here; the whole is carefully edited and annotated, and the edition is suitably inscribed to Mr. Gosse, author of the standard monograph on Congreve.

Congreve's career was a remarkable one. He was English born, of an ancient Staffordshire family, the date of his birth being 1670. The family shortly removed to Ireland, where Congreve's father was commander of the garrison at Youghal; the boy went to Kilkenny School and

Trinity College. An Irish connection seems to be essential for the production of the best English comedy: Goldsmith, Sheridan, Wilde, and Mr. Shaw were all Irish born. At eighteen Congreve returned to England, at twenty-one he came to London, and was admitted to the Middle Temple, at twenty-two he published his novel, and he was not yet twenty-three when his first play, *The Old Bachelor*, was put on the stage. It had actually been drafted, during a convalescence, before the youth had ever set foot in London; its success was as prodigious as its precocity. The town flocked to the theatre, and the venerable Dryden saluted its author as a brother. Within four years *The Double-Dealer*, *Love for Love*, and *The Mourning Bride* had followed; and Congreve was but thirty when his last and greatest comedy, *The Way of the World*, was produced. Thereafter he wrote nothing but fragments and occasional verses. His achievements secured him a succession of offices. He was Commissioner of Hackney-Coaches, Commissioner of Wine Licences, Searcher of Customs and Secretary of Jamaica; Tories and Whigs were equally kind to him, and gout and semi-blindness neither disqualified him for office nor prevented him from enjoying the congenial society of the cultivated rich. The consideration in which he was held, and the peculiar position in which he stood, is indicated by the fact that he received the dedication of Pope's *Iliad*. Congreve stood above party and was great enough to be adequate substitute for the leader of either party. In his later years he

CONGREVE

rode with Mrs. Bracegirdle, visited country houses, received his friends, but did not write. He died in 1729; Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, wrote his epitaph, and his funeral was at Westminster, and magnificent.

There was first a period of early and profuse production, and then one of gentlemanly idleness. What accounted for it? Mr. Summers believes that Congreve was nipped in the bud by Jeremy Collier. It was in 1698 that Collier's *Short View* appeared, in which, with great learning and frenzied vituperation, that odd High Church divine anathematised the English stage as a sink of immortality, obscenity, and profanity. Congreve was, and very unjustly, singled out for special attack, and, much as he disliked public controversy, he felt obliged to reply. Macaulay grossly exaggerates the inadequacy of his reply; he explained his aims, and to a large extent justified particular passages which Collier, who had no sense of proportion, had singled out. It was the eternal conflict between morals and taste. Congreve thought he had exercised a due discretion of speech, Collier that many things should not be alluded to in any event. The Puritan saw evil where none was; for Congreve was justified in thinking that he at least had given little offence. Mr. Summers, who sees red when the notion of expurgation is about, is as violent in one direction as Collier was in the other; he seems to suggest that there was nothing at all wrong with the Restoration stage. At all events, as usual in human history, one excess was followed by another.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

The public was excited by Collier ; State prosecutions began ; the drama (though no other form of literature) was compelled to mind its p's and q's ; for some years even the mildest oath had to be avoided ; and after this, if not on account of this, good comedy died and Congreve stopped writing.

Perhaps he would have stopped without Collier's encouragement. Congreve, after he got his sinecures, was in no need of money. As a comic playwright he was more prolific than Goldsmith or Sheridan. His vein may have been exhausted. In any event he was not by temperament inclined to a life of hard literary labour ; comedy was an income and an amusement to him, not a mission ; the best in this kind are but toys. The story that he told Voltaire that he wished to be visited as a gentleman, not as an author, may not be true. Even if it is there is no reason to be angry about it, as some zealots have been ; the author of a comedy of manners may reasonably think manners to be as important as comedy. Congreve, as an author, was neither a reformer (in spite of his weak assertions about moral propaganda in his answer to Collier), nor one who was expressing his own deepest feelings about life and eternity ; why then should he take his plays too seriously ? He was a prince of artificers and knew it ; those eyes, which looked so coolly at the World, could look with equal coolness on the *Way of the World*. He was, in any event, probably annoyed by the pretensions of authors. " I," he writes,

CONGREVE

that hate Books (such as come daily out
By Publick Licence to the Reading Rout).

He was a refined and retiring man, and he must have been a very agreeable one. The one inexplicable action of his life was his bequest of his estate to the rich Duchess of Marlborough, when Mrs. Bracegirdle and his own family were in need. But we do not know all the circumstances, and the Congreve of the plays, the friend of Dryden, and Swift, cannot be judged by that. He was, no doubt, very tolerant, and had few illusions, but how else could he have written such plays? His conception of his art is stated in the one short essay that he did for the *Tatler* :—

a gentleman remark'd, that there was no method in the world of knowing the taste of an age, or period of time, so good, as by the observations of their persons represented in comedies.

And he remarks elsewhere that "it were very hard that a painter should be believed to resemble all the ugly faces that he draws." It is true that most of his characters are silly or vicious; but he very properly observed to Collier, who had subjected these to statistical examination, that perfect characters were hardly the right subjects for comic treatment. Such as his persons are, they are astonishingly well drawn. They are types, but they are individualised just as far as characters can be if it is not desired to penetrate those depths which destroy comedy. By the

SUNDAY MORNINGS

slightest inflections of speech he differentiates even his least important servants: Mincing, Waitwell, and Foible are as surely differentiated as Millamant and Lady Wishfort, Valentine and Ben: he can breathe life into a character with a single sentence. His plots are well handled, though rather complicated; but it is a commonplace to say that his supreme gift is shown in his dialogue. Nowhere else in our drama is such perfection of phrasing to be found, English at once so musical, so economical, so accurate, so easy; it is like a chime of bells, yet every word is in character, and the author is never tempted by his great gifts of epigram and image, humour and irony, to put things into the wrong mouths. Any page of dialogue makes characters leap to the mind; they speak aloud on the page. Here are two contrasted passages where girls of different types are arguing with men. The first is Prue with her lumbering sailor:—

But I'm sure it's not so, for I'll speak sooner than you should believe that; and I'll speak truth, tho' one should always tell a lie to a man; and I don't care, let my father do what he will; I'm too big to be whipt, so I'll tell you plainly, I don't like you, nor love you at all, nor never will, that's more. So, there's your answer for you; and don't trouble me no more, you ugly thing.

The other is Millamant's answer to Mirabell when he asks if she has any more conditions to make:—

Trifles—as liberty to pay and receive visits

CONGREVE

to and from whom I please ; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part ; to wear what I please ; and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste ; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance ; or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please ; dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate ; to be sole Empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And, lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

How delicious, yet unforced, is that word "dwindle"! Congreve's finish is like that of a Chinese carver of ivory ; he carves scenes, paragraphs, sentences, with an equal care. His plays are scattered with quotable epigrams ; he was the sole origin of the epigrammatic manner of Sheridan and Wilde. Here is the true accent of the kind : "A woman who is not a fool can have but one reason for associating with a man who is one" ; there is a touch personal to Congreve himself in Witwoud's "She has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait till she dies, before it can catch her last words." Congreve's deliberation, his certainty with his effects is shown in every detail : in his openings, his entrances, his curtains. What could be finer than

Millamant's first appearance? "Here she come i' faith," says Mirabell in the park, "full sail with her fan spread and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders." Where is there a better opening than that of this same *Way of the World*—Mirabell and Fainall Rising from Cards Betty waiting—and the first sentences that arise out of the situation? The perfection of Congreve's comedies does not extend to his one tragedy, where there is some bombast, some looseness of characterisation, some fumbling with crises. Yet Mr. Summers is quite right in saying that its worth has been underrated in modern times. There are affecting scenes and noble passages besides the one over which Dr. Johnson was so frequently enthusiastic. The play as a play is better than any tragedy of the next century, and the verse is usually both dignified and melodious. There are scenic possibilities in it too; and it would be a good thing were the Phoenix Society to add *The Mourning Bride* to the list of their Congreve revivals.

I cannot conceive a more satisfactory edition than this. The production is worthy of the Nonesuch Press, whose little Donne and Marvell were models of beauty and cheapness. Mr. Summers has done Congreve even more thoroughly than he did Donne. His notes are all that is required; his knowledge, both of theatrical history (he talks of minor Caroline actors as familiarly as of Charles Hawtrey) and of out-of-the-way literature is astonishing; he seems to have read all the worst plays and romances that

CONGREVE

ever were written, and to have remembered every detail of them all. His introduction is a delight. Judicious is hardly the word for him ; but the most judicious are not always the most readable. He is an enthusiast, whose gift for free speech is fully equal to his belief in it. When he refers to Jeremy Collier, " whose hysterical screamings and scoldings were to some degree perpetuated by being condensed in the vapid and lack-lustre philippics of one who was both pedant and prig, Thomas Babington Macaulay," we know that he does not agree with Macaulay ; he himself is rather like a Jeremy Collier turning his guns the other way. Raciness and erudition such as his would give interest to any edition he produced ; and however he may allow himself to be carried away in controversy with Puritans, Prigs, and Pedants, he is exact enough in his purely editorial work. An edition by Mr. Summers is a standard edition and a mine of amusement ; I hope he will live to do many other neglected authors of his period, Rochester for example and Walsh. Walsh is especially neglected and of especial interest : he wrote little, but his greatest contemporaries revered his judgment and his least sentence has style. In connection with him I may add that it is possible that the whole history of " Squire Trelooby " is not yet clear. The version we possess—it is an adaptation from Molière's *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*—is said to have been produced by Congreve, Walsh and Vanbrugh together. There exists, I am told by my friend Mr. Dennis Arundell, music by Purcell to an

SUNDAY MORNINGS

earlier play called *The Gordian Knot Unty'd*. This play is not extant, but it was written by somebody who had recently produced "a dialogue on women." The only work of the time with that title was by Walsh; and it seems possible that Walsh by himself made a version of Molière's play which formed a basis for the subsequent joint production.

October 14, 1923.

MAURICE HEWLETT

MAURICE HEWLETT is dead at the age of sixty-two. To those who were his friends—and to be his friend was to be devoted to him without reservation—his death means more than the end of a full and varied artistic career. It comes as the death of a young man comes. Physically, with his sparse white hairs and seamed dark face, he showed his age. But when he was talking, his fine head tossing, his brown eyes burning, it was impossible to remember it, so great was his zest for life, so unimpaired his curiosity, so hearty his hatreds and loves, so frank and impetuous his speech.

He abhorred the respectabilities as much as he applauded the decencies ; he was quite naturally the contemporary of any younger man in company with him ; he felt pity, slightly tinged with contempt, for men who grow intellectually and emotionally fat or feeble with the passage of years ; one felt sure that if he lived till eighty his spirit would still have the alertness of a swordsman and the ardour of a lover. He never clung to his own past or brooded over, though he often enjoyed, his memories ; what he was doing at the moment engaged his whole strength, and the strength never flagged.

This perennial freshness is reflected in his work, if it be regarded as a whole. His first

book, which was not published until he was thirty-four, happened to be a volume of poems, but for many years he was principally a novelist. The vast success of *The Forest Lovers* came early ; he had adapted Pre-Raphaelitism to fiction, and people expected him to go on doing it. He was content to leave that to his imitators ; the thing was done and behind him. He wrote his Italian tales, and Italy was abandoned. He wrote in *The Queen's Quair* and *Richard Yea and Nay* the two finest historical novels of our generation, and then he passed to other fields, to novels of modern England, to new versions of the old sagas of the north.

After a time his chief centre of interest shifted from the novel. The larger public still insisted on regarding him as a novelist and, to his annoyance, as first and foremost the novelist of *The Forest Lovers* ; he got so tired of seeing that book bracketed with his name whenever it was mentioned that he would even, in talk, underrate it. It was something of a millstone to a man who had long ago turned to other paths where he knew well he was doing good work too little recognised.

For in his last eight years, possibly the richest in production of all his life, Hewlett as poet and essayist produced a volume of work which would have given him a great reputation had not the stupid habit of labelling people led so many to assume that these last books were merely the recreations of an elderly novelist. Latterly his qualities were beginning to be recognised ; he was, as it were, embarked on a second career ;

now that he is dead the admission will doubtless be unqualified.

A considerable change came over him. He who had travelled widely ceased to travel. He who had seen much of the world came seldom to London, and saw only such friends as penetrated to his house in Wiltshire, seven miles from a railway station, an old monkish stone house, with a trout stream flowing through the gardens which, restless maker that he was, he was always altering and improving. His interest shifted back to the soil and the life of the country; simultaneously his language, though always full of flavour, grew simpler, less mannered and jewelled, than it had been.

The first important result of this retirement was *The Song of the Plow*, an epic with the English agricultural labourer as hero, which he used in jest to call *The Hodgiad*. It flows exhilaratingly through its five thousand lines, summarising that history which from Alfred to the Great War has passed over "Hodge's" head largely unknown to him, perceived by him only as his wages rise and fall, or penalties are laid upon him, or he is dragged off to the wars. Some of the argument may be disputable, but the narrative never flags. There are exquisite pieces of natural description when the abiding background, the fields, the churches, the village elms, are sketched, and the poem is the direct fruit of a passionate sympathy with suffering, and especially with the suffering of humble and voiceless folk, which was characteristic of Hewlett.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

That sympathy is at the root also of *The Village Wife's Lament*, one of the most vivid and poignant of all his writings, a poem of the war. And it is present also in many of his essays. These essays collected in *Wiltshire Essays*, *In a Green Shade*, and other volumes, are excelled for variety and vigour by none of our own time.

One never knew what was coming next. It might have been an essay about rooks in winter, or hedgehogs, or agricultural wages, or Mr. Bridges, or Castiglione, or Count d'Orsay or Hesiod. He was very catholic; as he loved all four seasons, so he had an equal affection in literature for primitive force and civilised polish. He had not what, writing of Hazlitt, he called "that bad symptom of the violent lover, that he could only honour his love at another's expense."

Hewlett was both a creative artist and a scholar, a combination rare in our time. He wore his learning as lightly as a scarf; there was no touch of pedantry in him, and he would have found no pleasure in impressing people by a display of erudition; he learned because life interested him, and he could not help learning. It is not generally realised that his early novels have an immense background of reading behind them. *The Forest Lovers* did not come out of a mere casual knowledge of Malory, Froissart and Burne-Jones's pictures. Some years ago he sold most of his medieval books; but he had possessed and intimately knew almost every old French or English chronicle which ever found its way into print. I believe he taught himself Greek when he

MAURICE HEWLETT

was grown up ; anyhow, he knew his Greek poets well, as he knew his Icelandic.

He was intimately familiar with the literature of the Italian Renaissance—with which he had much in common—and he had a thorough knowledge of all branches of English literature. Of the literature of biography and correspondence in particular he was a profound student—if the word student could be used of a man who read because he enjoyed character and event. He could, at a moment's notice, find his way to any incident not merely in the great writers of this class, the Walpoles, Sévigné, Grevilles, Saint-Simons, but in the works of the small fry, such books as Cyrus Redding's, and Lackington's, and Bamford's *Memoirs of a Radical*; when he talked of the society of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, he talked as a man might who had personally known it.

There is no space here for more than a note on Hewlett ; nor, candidly, am I in the mood for it. He was one of the most honest of artists, and one of the most generous of men.

June 17, 1923.

MAURICE HEWLETT'S ESSAYS

POSTHUMOUS collections of papers by eminent writers are commonly disappointing. The mistaken piety of relatives, jealous lest any scrap be lost, gathers together odds and ends, chips from the workshop ; and the reader of these gleanings has learned to expect little. Let there be no mistake, however, about this book (*Last Essays*) of Maurice Hewlett's. Nothing he would have rejected is here, and nothing fragmentary. It is the ripe fruit of his genius for the essay ; the fourth of his collections of essays and unmistakably the best.

Hewlett came to the form late ; his kind of essay could not have been written by a young man. After a very full life and a prolific career as novelist and poet, he retired during his last years to an old house in a Wiltshire hamlet among the downs. A few friends visited him ; now and then he came to London for a day and fled it again as quickly as he could. There he lived, watching a narrow and quiet world, and remembering all the other worlds, both of life and of literature, that he had known : the accumulations of a life of devouring zest were ready for the service of an art which especially thrives on the memory of details observed. He was tired of the novel ; poetry was a matter of occasional inspiration ; he had to write ; and he found a natural outlet for his

MAURICE HEWLETT'S ESSAYS

restless communicativeness in printed talk. He drifted into the essay as a casual journalist, and developed into a master. And the odd thing was that he became one of the most spontaneous of essayists. The prose of his novels, as everybody has observed, had a certain deliberate and artificial tinge, which was reflected also in the earlier of his poems. You could like the tinge or not ; it was there, though mannerisms in Hewlett which appeared calculated were not always so. As an essayist, at any rate at the end, he wrote with at least what seems to be not only a total absence of affectation, but a total absence of deliberation, of self-consciousness even. He was an eager man, eager in his very catholic interest in facts, eager also in argument. He knew a vast amount about nature, mankind, and books ; he had travelled, he had dined out, he had suffered ; he had passionate convictions and entertaining hobby-horses ; he had an extraordinarily prehensile and vivid memory ; and when he began to talk in print he poured out an astonishing miscellany of information and recollection, coloured by a personality at once fierce and tender, and couched in the language of one who was writing as fluently, as brusquely, as changefully as he talked, but whose talk had itself the effortless distinction that came from wide culture and a previous life of hard application to the art of expression. There are fine sustained passages in his essays, but they arise naturally out of their surroundings, and fluctuate truly with true emotion : there is not a line written merely for effect, and not a page

SUNDAY MORNINGS

which makes one hear the author saying to himself, "Now for some fine writing."

One never knew what kind of subject he would write on next. Nor did he. Anything was liable to catch his attention, and anything that caught it sufficed to unseal the springs of his knowledge and his fancy. He never tired of life or made easy terms with beauty or pain. The ardour in these essays is a young man's; the experience could not be that. This union gives them their peculiar quality amongst English essays; vision and humour, partisanship and tolerance are mingled here in odd relations; and his standing interests are also a strange collection to be found together. There is a group of essays in which he makes a faithful record of the lives of poor country folk, the record not of a cool observer but of one who was engaged in every fibre of his being, a man aware of his own roots in the soil and always conscious of the few simple elements in human life that civilisation tends to veil, birth, marriage and death, hunger, cold, heat, and the rain. Such a kind of essay may be found elsewhere, but not elsewhere side by side with a group of laughing, penetrating, erudite, sophisticated studies of the French memoirs of the eighteenth century. At one moment he is arguing the origins of our ballad poetry, at another lamenting the fall of the Agricultural Wages Board, at another shedding only half a tear over the doomed splendours of Welbeck and Woburn. Pepys, Dorothy Osborne, and Lamb are talked about with the same interest and freedom as the

MAURICE HEWLETT'S ESSAYS

architecture of our Iberian ancestors and the precise distribution of our wild flowers, a full and very entertaining transcript of the roguish life of Cardinal de Retz stands side by side with a grim stark series of pictures of the death and dissolution of a sheep on a Cumberland hillside. And all his knowledge and interests are ready at any moment ; he did not compose the " set piece," and if an illustration from anywhere or a digression anywhere occurred to him, out it came precisely as it would have done had he been talking to an intimate. He could not be bored to check himself, and this candour is responsible for a great part of the charm of these days.

" Winter's Tales," he said, " will go on because there will always be winter's evenings, and the most interesting thing, next to playing at life, is to talk about it." His pen flew as his tongue flew ; the character of the process is difficult to define. Unexpectedness is certainly a principal quality, both unexpectedness of allusion, illustration, and transfer of theme and unexpectedness of phrase. He will flower into a beautiful and poignant sentence in a documentary passage, or an odd twist of humour will appear with a curious effect of incongruity. We have just read a long description of his revulsion against the luxury of London in general—the Ascot procession in particular ; suddenly he startles us with :—" The sea saw that and fled ; Jordan was driven back," which means that Maurice Hewlett packed his bag and bolted back to Wiltshire and the haymakers. It is just the sort of thing he used to say and just

SUNDAY MORNINGS

the sort of thing that a more cautious and formal essayist would have falsified himself by deleting. The embedded quotations, often puckishly misused, are extremely numerous, and the endings of the essays are as informal as befitted those of a man who wrote an essay on endings, which itself concluded with the refreshing suggestion that nobody knows what the endings of most modern novels are like because nobody reaches them. He "lets himself go" in all kinds of ways: jovially as in his description of the traffic at Hyde Park Corner held up to allow a duck and her brood to pass, combatively in controversies upon a dozen subjects, satirically when he is contemplating the vast monuments of the "Boulter" family in the parish church of "Bindon St. Blaise." From this medley of picture and humour I may extract some sentences:—

Inside, the church revealed itself as a family vault, so encumbered with the dead that the living must have been incommoded. In the midst of life they were in death indeed. Earls in effigy slept (like Priam's sons in the Iliad) beside their chaste wives—flat in brasses, worn smooth in basalt, glaringly in plaster, as might be. A side-chapel was so full of them that the altar was crowded out: and why not? They were altar and sacrifice and deity in one. They spilled over on to the floor, splayed out on the walls in tablets, as massy as houseleeks; and on the bosses of the vaulted roof one found the Boulter arms implanted in the heart of the Mystic Rose. O too much Boulter—but we

MAURICE HEWLETT'S ESSAYS

were not shut of them yet. Discreetly curtailed off was a Holy of Holies, where the shining ones who survived worshipped their ancestors ; a noble apartment, a withdrawing room, with a stove, a couple of sofas, some club-chairs, and a deeply padded elbow cushion. Magazines, an ash-tray, a match-stand—one missed them.

The story-teller is in evidence here ; in this essay he conjures up a whole family and its surroundings in such a way that the reader cannot help developing the theme himself. The story-teller, in another aspect, is present also in every paragraph of "*Interiors*," one of the finest things in the book, a series of Sketches, done with the usual air of vivid rapidity, of things which he has seen through windows :—

I have seen other things of sharper savour, where passion clearly was involved, and, as it seemed, the creatures themselves uncurtained as well as the room they occupied. Two of them, related long ago, I shall always remember ; the first, seen by chance from a window of the Army and Navy Stores, which looked out over the purlieus of Westminster toward the river. That showed me a mean, second-floor bedroom just over the way, and a little maid-servant in it, down at heels, draggled, her cap awry, dusting and tidying up. All familiar, uninteresting, a matter of routine, until suddenly I saw her throw her head up—a gesture of real abandonment—and fall on her knees beside the bed. She buried her face in her

SUNDAY MORNINGS

bare arm ; and I moved away. That was no place for me. Startling though, to be jolted out of the smooth apparatus of shopping, away from obsequious service and the accepted convention, in return for my half-crowns, that I was a temporary lord of the earth. All a sham, that ; but there across the street, in a frowsy bedroom, was reality—a soul and its Disposer face to face.

He cared about human beings ; in his criticism of literature, of which there is much in this volume, he always makes contact with the person behind the book. His likes and dislikes were very strong, but he always knew his reasons for them ; for all his pride, recklessness, and occasional indiscretion there was not a trace in him of the vice of which he mildly remarked, " The world is not to be advantaged by intellectual arrogance." Hewlett was too closely in touch with more important things to take the intellect too seriously. Not too seriously, into the bargain, would he have taken an attempt to analyse his own qualities. Literary comparisons were a game to him, not part of a solemn science ; and he would be content to pass the simple test which he formulated himself : " You judge Literature like coins at the Mint. You are either good or bad. If you ring false—out you go."

April 13, 1924.

A. CLUTTON BROCK

ARTHUR CLUTTON BROCK died last week at the age of fifty-six, after two years of ill-health and several months of serious illness. He was one of the sanest and most influential critics of his time.

His career was of an unusual kind. He did not publish his first, or his first considerable, book (the *Shelley*) until he was about forty; the majority of his books were written, and his reputation won, during the last ten years of his life. He was a collegier at Eton, and then went to New College, where his friends considered him a poet. On leaving Oxford he surprised them not so much by getting himself called to the Bar as by seriously attempting to practise as a barrister, and it was after ten years at the Bar that he joined the staff of the *Speaker*, predecessor of the *Nation*. For some considerable time he was chiefly known as a critic of painting, ultimately becoming Art Critic of *The Times*. His *Shelley* appeared in 1909, his *William Morris* (in the *Home University Library*) in 1914. The variety of his work since then may be attested by a bare list of titles: *Essays on Art*, two series of *Essays on Books*, two series of *Thoughts on the War*, *Simpson's Choice* (a satirical poem with a religious reference), *The Ultimate Belief*, *Shakespeare's Hamlet*, *Studies in Christianity*, and *What is the Kingdom of Heaven?*

SUNDAY MORNINGS

It will be observed that the arts, religion, and politics were all subjects on which he had much to say. They were all interlinked in his mind : art, perhaps, led him to politics, and politics to religion, which in his last years was increasingly his chief preoccupation. Even at the beginning he never wrote like a literary specialist. He could only see the arts in a relation to society and the human spirit and those against the background of eternity. His ear and eye were sensitive to the finest shades of technique in the arts, but he could not help being more moralist than æsthete. All his books are a continual effort to relate and reconcile truth, beauty, and goodness, artistic health and social health, social health and spiritual health. Whichever of his subjects gave him his nominal text, he was generally writing about them all at once. In some critics nothing is more annoying than their trick of talking of one art in terms of another ; in Clutton Brock this was not a trick, but a necessary habit. He saw all men as immortal souls and potential artists, all artists as men expressing, through various media, the relations between themselves on the one hand and the visible and invisible worlds on the other. Subject-matter, "content," was his chief concern and his eye for it led him to the establishment of the most interesting analogies, as for instance that between Donne and Poussin. It was not for him to write about war-pictures without writing about war. Great art could only, he said, derive from a "passionate personal interest in people and things" ; he might start from Mr. Nevinson's

A. CLUTTON BROCK

cubistic pictures, but he must soon be speculating on the state of our civilisation :—

Conscience was powerless to prevent it [the war] because conscience had ceased to believe in its own power, had come to think of itself as a vain and inexplicable rebellion against the nature of things. This rebellion we call sentimentality, meaning thereby that it is really not even moral; for true morality would recognise the process to which the nature of man is subject, of which that nature itself is a part; and would cure man of his futile rebellions so that he should not suffer needlessly from them. It would cure man of pity, because it is through pity that he suffers. He is a machine, and, if he is a conscious machine, he should be conscious of the fact that he is one. Such is the belief that has been growing upon us for fifty years or more with many strange effects. It has not destroyed our sense of pity, but has confused and exasperated it. We pity and love still, but with desperation, not like Christians assured that these things are according to the order of the universe, but fearing that they are wilful exceptions to that order, costly luxuries that we indulge in at our own peril.

When he wrote *A Defence of Criticism* he wrote as though a critic spoke only out of his experience of arts; it would have been interesting to have had an elaborate defence of his own criticism which, in the last resort, sprang from that outlook which forced him to construct as best he could a picture of his own fundamental views of existence.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

It is not to be understood, however, that he ever became wholly a moralist. "According," as he said, "to Whistler art is not a social activity at all; according to Tolstoy it is nothing else. But art is clearly a social activity and something more; yet no one has yet reconciled the truth in Whistler's doctrine with the truth in Tolstoy's. Each leaves out an essential part of the truth." This sentence illustrates at once the position he attempted to occupy as critic and the habitual temper of his mind. He is always making these oppositions. He says in his essay on Keats:—

It is strange how classical and romantic mean the same error when they express a defect of art. They mean a refusal of experience so that art may be made easy, as if the essence of art were not the choice of experience and the transfiguration of it.

He was aiming the whole time at common sense and balance, justice and truth; he preferred those qualities in others, and no writer to him was perfect. The pros and cons are always formulated in his criticism, more justly in his later than in his earlier. His prepossession is witnessed in the preface to the second edition of the Shelley. That book had originally been written as a manifesto of common sense. He was in reaction against the poet's extravagant admirers, those who deduce from Shelley's appearance and habits that a great poet must be a wild man with long hair and an open collar, those who think that the essence of poetry was his vegetarianism, and

A. CLUTTON BROCK

those who argue from his waywardness that a good artist must be polygamous. Clutton Brock threw a great deal of cold water on them; he wrote what was described as a middle-aged book about Shelley. Looking at it later, he perceived that he had been in reaction and had run to excess; so he boldly cut out many passages.

He held a tight hand over himself, and he had the defects of his qualities. Not all of the natural Clutton Brock got into his writing. In conversation he was eager and gay. I remember that the last time I saw him a luncheon-party of three extended itself to tea-time and almost to dinner-time, and the time went like an hour. He would certainly argue and discuss, his handsome head shot forward or bird-like tilted, his eyes sparkling with enjoyment, his teeth showing in an anticipatory smile while he was listening to somebody else. He would dissect any statement and throw, from his own experience, light on any problem with a vigour and candour which were sometimes startling. But he could be enthusiastic, and he could enjoy foolery. In print he was never carried away by enthusiasm, and scarcely ever joked except in a very quiet way. He was preaching sweet reasonableness not only to others but to himself. The responsibility of the critic's office was great, and he must let slip nothing unfair or unworthy, nothing if possible which could be disputed. He held himself in check, and the result is shown in two ways.

So far as concerns his manner, it was, in the strict sense, rather monotonous. Almost every

JOSEPH CONRAD

It is difficult to realise that Joseph Conrad is dead. His fame came late, and one can hardly persuade oneself that he was sixty-six. He had suffered from ill-health for years, but there had seemed no reason to expect a sudden death, and no one was prepared for the news. Moreover he produced, eight months ago, a book which showed that he retained all his powers; he was known to be writing another—about Napoleon's sojourn in Elba—and there was a doggedness of completion about his whole life and achievement that gave one the irrational feeling that fate or his will would carry him on until he had deliberately written his own "Finis" to his last chapter. He himself would have had no such illusion. He knew the sea :—

There are many shades in the danger of adventures and gales, and it is only now and then that there appears on the face of facts a sinister violence of intention—that indefinable something which forces it upon the mind and the heart of a man, that this complication of accidents or these elemental furies are coming at him with a purpose of malice, with a strength of control, with an unbridled cruelty, that means to tear out of him his hope and his fear, the pain of his fatigue, and his longing for rest; which means to smash, to destroy, to annihilate,

JOSEPH CONRAD

all he had seen, known, loved, enjoyed, or hated ; all that is priceless and necessary—the sunshine, the memories, the future—which means to sweep the whole precious world utterly away from his sight by the simple and appalling act of taking his life.

The obituaries have given an account of his extraordinary life, which was already widely known. The information is derived from his own books, and chiefly from *A Personal Record* and *The Mirror of the Sea*. He was the son of a Polish landowner, a scholar, and a gentleman, who translated Shakespeare and de Vigny, and took part in a rising against the Russian tyranny. The family would have had him also like his father and grandfather : a squire, a patriot, spending half his time as a paternal landlord in Poland and the other half in the Ukraine. What was it that ruled it otherwise ? As a child, reading indoors when the wastes outside were deep with snow, he was fascinated by the idea of the sea ; at seventeen, when he was in Switzerland with a tutor, he saw a ruddy English family stride past him on a mountain road, and instantly thought “ that is the nation to which I want to belong.” Family opposition was useless ; before long he was the runaway at sea, and at twenty-six he was a naturalised Englishman and a Master in our Mercantile Marine.

Ten years afterwards he had finished his first book and begun, very late, his career as an author. *Almayer's Folly* was written in all sorts of places : in Pimlico lodgings, in harbour at Rouen, under

SUNDAY MORNINGS

the shadow of Flaubert, in a small steamer far up the tropical solitudes of the Congo. Conrad himself has told the story of his first reader, the first stray man to whom he showed these essays in writing a strange tongue and in writing it like an artist in words. It was a delicate Cambridge man who was a passenger on his ship, and died soon after. He took the manuscript and was asked three questions: Was it worth finishing? "Distinctly." Was he interested? "Very much." Was it all clear? "Yes, perfectly." Then, "a westerly blow came on," and there was work on deck. Laconicism was never unpalatable to Conrad; he went on with the book; it was published, and it was one of the most remarkable first novels ever written. Looking back on it now, one is astonished to find how fully-fledged, how much his later self in art and manner, Conrad already was. Here are two descriptions by the sea-captain anticipating many of the finest passages, some half ruminative, some purely material, of the late books:—

One of those drifting trees grounded on the shelving shore, just by the house, and Almayer neglecting his dream, watched it with languid interest. The tree swung slowly round, amid the hiss and foam of the water, and soon getting free of the obstruction began to move down stream again, rolling slowly over, raising up wards a long, denuded branch, like a hand lifted in mute appeal to heaven against the river's brutal and unnecessary violence. Almayer's interest in the fate of that tree increase

JOSEPH CONRAD

rapidly. He leaned over to see if it would clear the low point below. It did; then he drew back, thinking that now its course was free down to the sea, and he envied the lot of that inanimate thing now growing small and indistinct in the deepening darkness. As he lost sight of it altogether, he began to wonder how far out to sea it would drift. Would the current carry it North or South? South, probably, till it drifted in sight of Celebes, as far as Macassar, perhaps.

They were just leaving the southern outlet of the Pantai, which lay behind them in a straight and long vista of water shining between two walls of thick verdure that ran downwards, and towards each other, till at last they joined and sank together, in the far-away distance. The sun, rising above the calm waters of the Straits, marked its own path by a streak of light that glided upon the sea and darted up the wide reach of the river, a hurried messenger of light and life to the gloomy forests of the coast; and in this radiance of the sun's pathway floated the black canoe heading for the islet which lay bathed in sunshine, the yellow sands of its encircling beach shining like an inlaid golden disc on the polished steel of the unwrinkled sea. To the north and south of it rose other islets, joyous in their brilliant colouring of green and yellow, and on the main coast the sombre line of mangrove bushes ended to the southward in the reddish cliffs of Tanjong Mirrah, advancing into the sea, steep and shadowless under the clear light of the early morning.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

He had already perfected his slow, sad rhythm with an almost unfailing sense of the sound of our words ; he had already his astonishing power of rendering a thing seen in the most exact language. It is an exaggeration to say that his language was flawless. Even in his later books there are slips, usually into Gallicism of epithet or construction ; there are several in *The Rover*, and in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* he speaks of " a girl in a clear dress," a phrase which no Englishman could have used. Yet there are so few that none, without special information, could have dreamed that a foreigner had written these novels. His language is as apt for intellectual analysis as for physical description ; few writers of stories containing such vivid and violent action have had his faculty and his proclivity for elaborate searchings of heart and conscience, for precise dissection of human relationships. Nor is he, as he has sometimes been assumed to be, almost exclusively a novelist of the sea. It is true that many of his most memorable characters are sailors, and that the sea " comes into " most of his books ; but only two or three of his novels, and a few short stories have the most of their action set at sea. There are the stories of the East Indian Archipelago ; there is *Nostramo*, which is placed in Central America ; there are the novels of revolution and intrigue, French, Russian, Carlist, all betraying an intimate knowledge of terrene communities. And as one recalls the diversity of his characters one realises the range of his observation, which covered almost everything which is beyond the

JOSEPH CONRAD

daily vision of our urban eyes. He saw many men, many types of men; all in action and all suffering. "There is precious little rest in life for anybody," said Captain Giles, "better not think of it." And he saw them all sympathetically but detached, from the outside. His revolutionaries, he observed, as a Pole with a Catholic and European culture, "under Western eyes"; his mankind he observed, as one conscious of the mystery of existence, the transience of life, the blindness of effort, "sub specie aeternitatis." His captain in *The Shadow Line* speaks at his worst crisis, with the deeper voice of the contemplative Conrad:—

As I emerge on deck the ordered arrangement of the stars meets my eye, unclouded, infinitely wearisome. There they are: stars, sun, sea, light, darkness, space, great waters; the formidable Work of the Seven Days, into which mankind seems to have blundered unbidden. Or else decoyed.

In appearance Conrad was very striking. The beard, the short square-set figure, had the right quarter-deck air; but there was a fierce, flashing, intense look about him which no profession could have subdued, the look of an aristocrat of the spirit and of art. There was concentration and sensibility in all his expressions and movements; walking or talking, cigarette between fingers, he was restless; his large penetrating eyes burned in an ashen face, corrugated with lines cut as it were with steel; every line and outline, his wrinkles,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

his eyebrows, the hairs of his beard, preternaturally strong and black, as in a hard charcoal drawing. He spoke courteously, but positively and carefully; always oddly enough, with a foreign accent that one never would have deduced from his writing; everything about him proclaimed his passionate persistence, his nerves and the unconquerable will that mastered them, his chivalry, his pride, his sensitiveness, his integrity. Life with him had been a series of long struggles, all of which had left their marks on him. First of all, he, native of a country without a coast, made himself a seaman and a fine seaman. Next he slowly acquired and then completely mastered the language of his adoption. And then, through many years of adversity and comparative neglect, he laboured incessantly and with painful fastidiousness at his art, allowing—whatever his financial disabilities may have been—no line of the cheap or the merely commercial to escape him, wrestling with and overcoming the most complicated situations, the subtlest refinements of meaning, the most recalcitrant tones of things seen, all the larger and lesser problems of technique. In all his phases his actions manifested his creed, which was of such a nature that only in action could it be manifested.

In an age when many men of letters spend half their time arguing about politics, ethics, religion, and biology, Conrad refrained very deliberately from didacticism. Yet argument, and very firm argument, lies beneath his detachment, just as the hankering of the one and the views of the other may be detected behind the objective art of the

JOSEPH CONRAD

two men whose writing most influenced Conrad—Flaubert and Henry James. Of theology he said nothing, and implied nothing; he was born and died a Catholic, but in his books human life is a little candle burning against a great darkness. No doubt, no uncertainty, came into his estimate of human values: his creed there was preached without intermission, if usually by suggestion and without the primary intention of preaching. In *Lord Jim*, Marlow exclaims:—

Hang ideas! They are tramps, vagabonds knocking at the back-door of your mind, each taking a little of your substance, each carrying away some crumb of that belief in a few simple notions you must cling to if you want to die decently and would like to live easy.

In the Preface to *A Personal Record* he repeats what he previously put into the mouth of Marlow. "It is better," he says, "for mankind to be impressionable than reflective. . . . Nothing humanely good has come from reflection." The attitude might be misrepresented, of course; but he knew what he meant:—

Those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a few very simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills. It rests notably, amongst others, on the idea of Fidelity. At a time when nothing which is not revolutionary in some way or other can expect to attract much attention. I have not been revolutionary in my writings.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Stedfastness, Honour, Courage, Pity, Generosity; to the old abstractions he held firm; and, when he disclaimed "ideas" and "reflection," what he meant was that he refused to pull these up by the roots in order to dissect them with the double-edged knife of reason. There was a critic of *Lord Jim* who called the book "morbid"; the reason was that *Lord Jim* spent his days brooding over a single act of cowardly panic, of infidelity and betrayal, and was never happy until he had redeemed himself (it is the only way) by doing the second time what he had failed to do the first. To Conrad those who will question courage and honour, stifling the promptings of decent tradition and conscience as being the product of mere inherited superstition, were in the same category as those who question our notions about cannibalism. He deliberately loaded the dice so as to give Jim every possible and plausible excuse. Jim acted on impulse; he knew that his staying behind on the doomed ship would not save the ignorant passengers; but he remained wrong in his own and in his creator's eyes. It is the old seaman's cult of "Duty and Discipline"; to a sailor there is none other workable; and he will see, if he is a thinking man, our human societies on the earth as a fleet of ships navigating dark and menacing and illimitable oceans. The night overhead does not break; there is nothing for it but to cling to the service we know and to keep the vessel afloat and moving by the means we have learned. And steering thus into the unknown he cannot help finding a virtue in a certain stoicism of

JOSEPH CONRAD

self-restraint. Even about duty and honour he will not talk too much, preferring that deeds should speak, "Il y a toujours la manière," even in anger and love. The manner Conrad rigidly preserved. He refused to lie either on the gloomy or the sentimental side. "The sight," he said, "of human affairs deserves admiration and pity; they are worthy of respect too, and he is not insensible who pays them the undemonstrative tribute of a sigh which is not a sob, and of a smile which is not a grin."

August 10, 1924.

CONRAD'S LAST BOOK

THIS last book, *Suspense*, was unfinished when Joseph Conrad died. It was to have been the culminating product of that long and intense study of the Napoleonic era which gave us, as by-products, *The Rover* and a story in his last volume of short stories. The scene, at the beginning, is laid in Genoa. Cosmo Latham, a young Englishman of good family, arrives there in 1814, after the Bourbon restoration in France—in fact, as it appears, just before the startling return of Napoleon from Elba. He finds himself there in a mesh of intrigue. Everybody around him is conspiring for something or other. The first man he talks to on the shore, his innkeeper, an English doctor, who is his fellow-guest, the Count of Monteverso, who has married his childhood's companion, Adèle de Saint-Armand : all these are active, and along the narrow streets and in and out of corridors flit elusive figures, sailors and servants, who are accessories to the mysterious business. At the centre of it all is Adèle, beautiful, tender, unhappy, self-controlled : his doom.

Thus far we are brought, and we are left, without knowing whither it was going to lead. There is plenty of incident. Better eaves-droppings, kidnappings, fights and escapes Conrad never devised : it is all a prologue but an intensely exciting one. The conversations have that at-

CONRAD'S LAST BOOK

mosphere of whispering expectancy in which Conrad excelled ; the characters are firmly drawn and arouse the greatest curiosity. The writing, too, is equal to his best. There are none of those pages of majestic music into which he was wont to rise when he surveyed the general fates of men, and the descriptive passages are not long sustained. The whole scene is there, though : the sea through all the hours of sunlight and starlight, the rocky coast, the harbour, the city with its dark lanes and heavy carven palaces. Every room that we enter is seen with acute clearness : firelit bedchambers, inn dining-rooms, vast salons sparsely furnished with settees in tarnished gold and faded silk. And everything perfectly rendered, is significant : chairs and tables, lights and shadows, noises and silences, all contribute to the tremendous tenseness at which Conrad was aiming. He achieved it. He piled up his thunder clouds ; and they never broke. We leave Cosmo at sea, on a felucca, bound for a destination which is not disclosed, and talking with a mysterious Carbonarist companion. These are the last sentences :—

“ We have thrown a bit of canvas over him. Yes, that is the old man whose last bit of work was to steer a boat, and strange to think, perhaps it was done for Italy.”

“ Where is his star now ? ” said Cosmo, after looking down in silence for a time.

“ Signore, it should be out,” said Attilio, with studied intonation. “ But who will miss it from the sky ? ”

The book is as long as most modern novels, and

SUNDAY MORNINGS

its fragmentary nature does not impair one's enjoyment of it ; but one has the impression that it is really little more than the beginning of a work, heroic in scale, much longer than anything that Conrad had ever before attempted. The measure of its excellence is the measure of our disappointment, which is all the more acute in that we are definitely told that we are to hope for no indication as to how Conrad would have finished it. I can think of no unfinished story in the language which has the magnitude of this, excepting *Edwin Drood*, and none save that which so provokes to speculation.

In a manner *Suspense* is even more tantalising than Dickens's book. It is true that many people have told us how *Edwin Drood* would have finished, that some have written full conclusions to it, and that the conjectures of these persons have exhibited a remarkable variety. But at least we know this much about *Edwin Drood* : that at the end the virtuous would have been left happy and the vicious duly punished ; and we feel certain, also, that the major elements in the narrative have already been introduced. Conrad's story leaves us utterly in the dark in both regards : we do not know what would have been the dominant theme of the book, to what crisis, what series of exciting events, historical or imaginary, the prologue here presented was leading ; and we have no indication at all as to what fate was likely to be in store for the principal characters already introduced. " I see five or six different lines of treatment," said Conrad to Mr. Curle, on the day before he died.

CONRAD'S LAST BOOK

The worst of it is that we can see any number, and yet cannot but feel that, given Conrad's temper, view of life, and characteristic method, one of the five or six in his mind was predestined and inevitable, and we cannot help searching and brooding in the vain hope of deciding what precisely that would have been.

Here we have the stage set, and certain characters brought in. There is a woman as mysteriously adorable as any of the lovely, wise, and sorrowful figures who sit upon the shores of his romance. There is a hero, perhaps more attractive than any that he ever conceived. There is Genoa, alive with intrigues, legitimist, Napoleonic, Carbonarist. There is Elba, just over the horizon, with its prisoner just preparing for the hundred days. There is France, about to welcome the returning Emperor: there is Italy dreaming of liberation and unity; there is Europe in the background, uneasy in "suspense," conscious of instability, awaiting an Event.

It is all preparation; the threads have not begun to join; the grand outcome has not yet begun to appear. To what was Conrad leading? That the book must in larger measure have remained a love story is certain: Conrad had brought Cosmo Latham and Adèle de Monteverso together with that air of fatality and finality that he knew so well how to communicate, and the development of that relation, whether tragic in its upshot or not, must have been followed to the end. Adèle must have remained in her Palazzo, or some similar seclusion, until parting, or death

SUNDAY MORNINGS

(which is a parting), or an unexpected happiness ; we might have had from her one act of daring heroism at a critical moment, but she was no woman for sustained plotting or vagrant adventure. Cosmo was to be the mobile character, whose enterprises, journeys, and encounters, would have determined—or perhaps, since this was fiction, have been determined by—the scenes to which we should have been introduced. We leave Cosmo aboard a felucca, bound for Leghorn in company with three patriotic desperadoes, who are plotting for a united Italy, and are apparently involved in Napoleonic intrigue. Whither, in the remaining half (or more probably two-thirds) of the book, would Cosmo have gone ? What would he have seen ? What would he have done ?

The publishers' description of the book states : " It is not a sea-story, but centres round the character of Napoleon Bonaparte." This may be prophecy, but it is not fact. Napoleon does not appear in this book, except as an invisible and imponderable power biding its time on an island beyond the skyline : an obsession and a pressure, but not a person, not a character. And I do not think the statement would even have proved valid as a prophecy. A novel " about " Napoleon would not have been in Conrad's line ; and had he been going to write one he would not have begun it like this. Napoleon, we may be certain, however dominant in the background, would in the foreground have appeared only as fleetingly, though as vividly, as did Nelson in the last pages of *The Rover*.

CONRAD'S LAST BOOK

I believe Cosmo would have gone to Elba. Conrad's imagination, I think, must have been drawn by that strange little kingdom (for Napoleon, by treaty, was sovereign of Elba); and there are certain indications in the book that he was leading up to a visit to the island and a glimpse of its monarch. A ship, at the beginning, leaves Genoa under the queer Elban flag; Cosmo tells Dr. Martel emphatically that Napoleon arouses his curiosity intensely, but that he despises the tourists who go to Elba to see him; in the last chapter Cosmo is in company with men who are bearing documents, which might well have been such documents as those which the French Government intercepted, which gave particulars of the dispositions of troops in the South of France.

Cosmo would have seen Napoleon; but could he have in any manner followed his fortunes? Certainly not as disciple: for all his qualified admiration and his open mind about the Holy Alliance, he was not of that sort. And in any other capacity, that of captive or mere spectator, he could only have been taken to Cannes, to Paris, to Waterloo, had Conrad wished to describe progresses, receptions, and battles in the manner of a panoramic artist. That manner was not Conrad's. That he could have brought himself to re-write Napoleon's biography for a hundred days, or to describe the squares, the charges, and the carnage of Waterloo, is to me inconceivable. He was not a Tolstoi on the one hand, nor a Zola on the other. His canvas, in a sense, was large

SUNDAY MORNINGS

enough: his background was eternity and infinity, the background of poets. Always he saw human actions, whether the large movements of nations and epochs or the loves, fears, and despairs of single souls, under the shadow of the eternal question, and the vigilance of the taciturn stars, which, as it were, besprinkle the darkness at the end of his every chapter and his every book. But the extensive human scene, the physical movements and shoutings of crowds, he preferred always to indicate obliquely; by glimpses, or by the effects of these vast events upon the fortunes and the conversations of individuals, powerfully illuminated in a corner of the picture.

Had he described the Deluge, he would probably not have taken us through that catastrophe on the Ark with the supremely important Noah, Ham, Shem, Japhet, and the animals after their kinds, but would have invented some solitary and subordinate soul who should separately have saved himself in a fortuitous boat, and ultimately watched the larger craft come to its temporary moorings on Ararat. Conrad avoided the conventional panoramic and he avoided the obvious.

But if the novel was not to have been, in the strict sense, Napoleonic, what would it have been? What suggestions there are seem to me to point to Italy, rather than France, as the scene of the main action. Lord William Bentinck, who got the Genoese to side against Napoleon in 1814, has been brought in. The companions of Cosmo are interested only in Italian nationalism. The mysterious Dr. Martel, who patently must have

CONRAD'S LAST BOOK

taken an important part in the plot, had relations (apparently) with Talleyrand, in Vienna, who at that time was surrounding Napoleon with spies. He must have been particularly engaged in watching the intrigues between Napoleon and Murat, who, in Naples, had visions of being King, or Emperor, of Italy: of frustrating Austria and the Allies on the one hand, and, on the other, coping with a restored Napoleon on equal terms. Murat's career: what a subject for a novelist, treated in any fashion! What drama in his precipitate stroke for Italy; and again in Napoleon's refusal (for the superman broke down here and could not forget his resentments) of the services of the man who might have led the cavalry at Waterloo! Should we have been switched off to that march to the Po, with its inglorious conclusion? I doubt it again. We should have remained, I think, with humble people, gallantly taking their part in the chivalrous movements of the time, or ignobly pulling strings in the base ones. Conrad, with his faith in a few simple virtues and his love for those who faithfully clung to them, united a strong curiosity about the smaller preliminaries of great actions, the furtive movements of secret societies, the motives of conspirators, the backstairs conversations of diplomatists. Once more here, did he remain with the Carbonari, he would have found his subject in a frustrated dream. In *Under Western Eyes* he was, on the whole, strongly antipathetic to the revolutionaries: here he could have been sympathetic. Either way,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

whether he was scorning the base or admiring the noble, his detachment could not but be conspicuous, and his pity for a race doomed to struggle under those serene stars. He revered Truth and he looked at it with an honesty of which few are capable, and the results of which few are willing to face.

One thinks of all these things, of Pozzo di Borgo and Castlereagh, and Metternich: and then one harks back to the personal drama of which we have seen only the first act. There is Cosmo; there is Adèle; there is her withered, megalomaniac, jealous stick of a husband; and there is the little tigress of an Italian niece, who must surely in the end have tried to kill somebody, or at least have seriously embarrassed somebody: for once made she could not lightly be dropped. What would have happened?

To those who have read the book (and this is the ultimate proof of its power and vividness) the question will present itself in the form: What *did* happen? One cannot know. It would have been tragic in the end, I think. A very few pages before the manuscript breaks off there are these sentences about Cosmo:—

At that very moment, while listening to the mysteriously low pitch of Attilio's voice, the thought flashed through his mind that there was something within him which made him a predestined victim of remorse.

Most of Conrad's heroes—as, in a manner, were all the human race to his habitual mood—were

CONRAD'S LAST BOOK

predestined victims of something. This sentence, one feels, is radical, and would not have been deleted; and such sentences in Conrad were always significant, and premonitory. Cosmo's fortuitous nocturnal trip to sea may have been the crucial event; he left Adèle behind him; somehow, surely, he would have been given a perpetual regret. And he would not have died: he would have carried it with him, back to the ancestral estates in Yorkshire. Still, we do not know. And we shall never know. Conrad completed many voyages, but from this voyage he did not return. He set sail, serenely in fair weather, on his finest ship, a five-master full-rigged: we know of him nothing more. He died afloat, like old Singleton in the *Nigger of the Narcissus*, who had weathered many storms and acquired much wisdom; and was resolved to work until at last the immortal sea would claim him, and he would never see port again.

September 20, 1925.

O.B.

IN the extracts which Mr. Percy Lubbock recently drew from Arthur Benson's immense diary, the most vivid and penetrating passages were those which dealt with persons now dead, and consequently (as the phrase goes) "released for exhibition." And the best of all was an attempt to describe Oscar Browning whose Life has now appeared. It failed, as all attempts to describe him must fail: the topless towers of Ilium were easier to surmount than the mystery of that man. But a very clear picture of the mystery was given in a series of brilliant antitheses. No man can ever have been such a bundle of opposites. There was a genius in him and a fool. At moments he seemed the greatest of egoists, at others the most selfless of philanthropists. He was wise and stupid, naïve and astute, humourless and full of laughter, a careerist devoted to the public weal, gross and otherworldly. Even his appearance was one minute majestic and the next grotesque. And even his work could not be criticised from one point of view without considerations running the clean contrary way, leaping to the mind. I remember a conversation when the Provostship of King's was vacant. "Isn't it a shame they won't give it to the O.B.?" "Do you think he's qualified for it?" "Oh, dear, no." He had a European reputation and it was based entirely on his

character : for his educational achievements were no greater than those of a thousand obscurer schoolmasters and dons.

Mr. H. E. Wortham, pious executor of a trust, official (though wonderfully free from the normal vices of the official) biographer, naturally pays a great deal of attention to the externals of Browning's teaching life, and discusses at length those episodes which to Browning himself seemed most important. The obligation was all the greater in that to some extent there seemed to be need for a clearing of Browning's memory. The once famous scandal of his dismissal from his Eton mastership, which led to a storm in the papers and a debate in the House, was very present to him until he died. The sense of injustice rankled, and he was aware that vague rumours, very injurious to himself, were in circulation throughout his life. Those who had an affection for O.B., those also who take an interest in the evolution of the English public school, will be very glad of the exhaustive analysis of the whole story which Mr. Wortham gives, in chapters as well-balanced and as well-documented as they could be. Yet, had the O.B. not been what he was, even a vindication would hardly have been interesting at this date. He was born in 1837; he went to Eton; he went to Cambridge; he was president of the Union; he went back to Eton as a master. There, for fifteen years, he remained, until, on a variety of grounds, he came into conflict with the unimaginative and illiberal Dr. Hornby, and was dismissed. He went back to Cambridge; was welcomed at

SUNDAY MORNINGS

King's; founded and developed the King's history school; founded and nursed to success the Day Training College; at seventy was politely superannuated by colleagues who thought his longer presence an embarrassment; retired to Rome; and died at eighty-six.

A creditable life: one of many. More creditable when it is realised that he was a man of vision, a humanising influence; that he was in advance of his time at Eton, that he was a pioneer at Cambridge, that he had a rare gift with boys and young men, whom he could draw out by sheer agelessness, breathing any latent spark to life by the force of his enthusiasm and ideals. But it was not that which made him the greatest figure in the Cambridge of his day: even those closest to him were not chiefly drawn to him by his insight and inspiration, so much interfered with by his patches of stupidity and lack of understanding. He had not been many years at Cambridge when he was asked to go and dine in "remote Downing." He wrote to his mother (who comes out in this book as a woman of unusual refinement, insight, and humour):—

The undergraduates were present, and after toasts were over there were loud shouts of Browning, O. B., Oscar, and I had to make a speech. It appears that I am very popular with the undergraduates, though I should have thought that those of Downing had never heard my name. I drank a great deal of champagne, and this morning feel quite vigorous again. It does credit to the wine.

Did he suppose that "those of Downing" were calling for the Eton reformer, or the founder of the Day Training College for elementary school-teachers, or the pertinacious and enlightened man who had given history a place in the sun with the classics at King's? They certainly were not! They had never heard of these things. They were calling for one of the great English comic characters: a figure at first sight for whom men could not but feel a mixture of love, amusement, admiration, and contempt.

Mr. Wortham disclaims a desire to show him in a comic light, and valiantly succeeds in keeping comedy down in the earlier part of his book, though he fails when he gets to the time when he knew the O.B. himself. Even during his narration of the earlier story he is compelled, in the discreetest way in the world, to exhibit the O.B.'s persecution-mania, his complete lack of understanding of what was going on in others' minds, his charming indiscretions, his rare talent for self-justification. More diary extracts would have reinforced the impression. Browning was but seventeen, and an Eton boy, when he solemnly wrote in his diary:

How little have I done for fame. How much I might have. Alexander—J. Cæsar—Byron, all rise and reprove me.

A few months later it was,

if geniuses are idle they never come to good.
Byron worked not perhaps at Latin and Greek,

SUNDAY MORNINGS

but read his life. Moore worked. Mat Arnold worked. Tennyson worked. May I.

In the early diary of a Tennyson such extracts would not appear odd: in the early diary of an Oscar Browning they do, for they reveal the solemnity and the lack of proportion that marked him throughout his life. Even his virtues have a comic aspect.

Industry and vitality, for example, he maintained until the end. In the last fourteen years of his life, he, a man whom everybody refused to take quite seriously as a historian, began, with zest, a new career exclusively devoted to composition. He wrote two million words in that old age, of which nearly a million could find no publisher. At seventy-six—it would have been magnificent in another, it was partly comic in him—he offered his services to the Government. His open-mindedness and universal curiosity were great qualities: but his mind was not so much open to novelties as yawning for them, and a conversation ranging from God to gastronomy was liable to amuse; whilst a man who, at eighty, learnt Esperanto as his fortieth language and embraced a new religion (which he reconciled with the old) seemed rather a fantastic creation of fiction than a real personage. He was kindness and generosity itself: his generosity led to perpetual comic embarrassments about overdrafts, and his charity meant that at any moment his friends might find his rooms populated with unfortunate boot-blacks (who might later dis-

appear with the spoons) or Italian organ-grinders who had been cruelly accused of vagrancy and could speak no English. If his virtues were almost vices, and consequently comic, his defects were almost virtues, and consequently comic. A thousand anecdotes were told about his snobbery : " the nicest Emperor I ever met " really was a phrase that he was at any moment liable to use ; and the stranger could not be two minutes in his rooms without being shown portraits of royalty. Yet, what might have been hateful, was in him harmless, for his was not the greedy snobbery of the climber, but the snobbery of the romantic. He never would have cut an acquaintance for shabbiness, though he might have cultivated one for lustre : the King and the dustman were both for him figures in a fairy-tale and, had occasion offered, he would have introduced them in the most majestic way.

His colossal vanity had an innocence about it that redeemed it. The great works (as his mother sadly saw quite early) were always ahead ; a new epoch of authorship was about to set in ; or posterity would admit what contemporaries had rejected. Who could mind when they knew that the poor old man had been, by his own standards, a failure ? That he had missed every office to which he aspired ; that he was fondly cherishing illusions as to his real status in academic and general society ; that he was genuinely taking pleasure in tinsel and grudging concessions, exhibiting cautious letters as great tributes, basking in a half-light for all the world as though

SUNDAY MORNINGS

it were the sun? Let him exhibit his lack of sense of proportion whenever he regarded either his own position or the scanty rewards he won! Just before his death a daily paper printed some of his verses in its poets' corner: to him it was "the greatest honour that can befall any author." Lord Curzon, his old and affectionate pupil, had the O.B.E. sent to his sick-room at Rome: judging from his rhapsodies it might have been the Garter. The University appointed him its representative at some Italian Dante celebrations: full reparation had been made for his scurvy treatment by Cambridge. He was happy. There might seem a Balzacian pathos about it. But he was really happy: the Téméraire was going down in glory: Napoleon and Julius Cæsar would at last receive their peer at the gates of Paradise.

Mr. Wortham suggests that he only became the astonishing creature he was in later life. I don't believe it. The bridge from the early diary to the O.B. we knew is too patent: density so dense as his, and impulses so strong, could not have grown upon a man. It was his permanent character that must have frustrated him (and endeared him) from youth onwards: time did but develop for him a physical appearance conformable with the paradoxical creature he was. Would that Mr. Wortham had been able to gather such personal descriptions of the early Browning as he gives of the later: the germs must all have been there. What a figure he was! I remember him, at sixty-six, vastly corpulent, swimming on his back in the

O. B.

Cam, puffing like a grampus ; and lumbering along the streets on his tricycle ; and in his rooms on a Sunday evening. There was the old man, with his huge Roman head and stumpy legs, his brow, his fleshy aquiline nose, his square mouth and chin and fat neck, eyelids like a lizard's, and rumbling querulous voice : turning to and fro like a sleepy prehistoric beast, leaping suddenly to life, enunciating maxims about all kinds of things, then hushing the undergraduates to silence as he waddled to the " obeophone " (a kind of harmonium) and played Mozart on one finger. A Fellow of King's draws a typical picture :—

I had to see O.B. one afternoon about tea-time. He had been playing some game, tennis, probably, for he liked its historical associations, and I found him just emerged from his bath, wrapped in an enormous towel and looking more like a Roman emperor than ever. There were two youths in the room—one was giving him tea, which he was drinking out of the saucer, a universal fashion in Russia he assured me, the other was playing the violin. O.B. received me without the least embarrassment, and continued his conversation whilst the one youth dried him and the other played—extremely badly, it appeared to me. He told me that afternoon that he had once had his horoscope cast, and that he had been born when Saturn was in Capricorn.

There are other such glimpses. More would have made the book more entertaining : but Mr. Wortham (whose book is a model in style and

SUNDAY MORNINGS

arrangement) has certainly succeeded in emphasizing the O.B.'s unquenchable enthusiasm for moral and political progress, which his eccentricity tended to obscure. I shall not forget the surprise when (my acquaintance with him was of the slightest) he launched a series of vigorous protests (I ultimately mollified him) at me from Rome for daring to estimate d'Annunzio's works apart from this moral influence. I loved him for it. But he always spoke as from a Papal chair and the chair wasn't there.

May 1, 1927.

THOMAS HARDY

THOMAS HARDY is dead, in his eighty-eighth year : one of the most illustrious of that band, Origen and the others, of whom he said himself that they "burned brightlier toward their setting day." That little bird-like body was active until it was at last stricken by this winter's cold ; and the eyes in the weather-beaten old face still twinkled with humour and curiosity. At eighty-seven he could still throw his head back and laugh with a youth's gaiety ; still course briskly round his garden (a little cosmos) chattering about its Roman remains and the signatures of German prisoners on the shed-door. Only last summer he made a speech. No blanketed mumbling in the chimney-corner for him. And his heart to the last was as young as his will ; no faculties decayed save the purely physical, and even those were preserved beyond the normal.

Trifles come back to me which may illustrate his complete refusal of old age, or at least his capacity for completely forgetting it. Seven years ago I happened to be in Dorchester with a cricket team, and called at Max Gate before the match. "Well," said Mr. Hardy, his bright eyes roving over recollections, "it's a great many years since I played cricket, but . . ." and it was quite evident that he had to make an effort to remind himself that he had better not offer to take part in the

SUNDAY MORNINGS

me. It must have been about a year after that arrived to hear the very unexpected news that he was "upstairs resting," but would come down. Why was he resting? He had not been on a cycle for twenty years, but had suddenly thought he would like a ride, borrowed a machine, and promptly pedalled it up a long hill. Such enterprises to him were not challenges to the natural course of things: all his movements were springy, but above all the movements of his spirit. Some discretion, of course, he exercised; it is nine years since he last travelled to London. But he did not, diurnally, find it easy to remember that his wiry small body was frailer than it had been.

And how could he always remember, except when (he wrote a curiously moving poem about this) he looked at the deep wrinkles around the eyes that were the windows of his eager mind? The world was still of inexhaustible interest to him; for all his love of gossiping about the past, he was still curious about present and future, and would discuss all manner of projects, whether for preserving the world's peace or the amenities of rural England, and still delighted to hear the latest personal news from the town whose roar he had left behind. He never grew satiated with experience; one of his latest poems was inspired by the noise and the lights of a motor-car going past his house at night; it would not surprise one to find that he had left behind him poems about television and the wireless, both as stimulating to the poetic imagination, as capable of being

THOMAS HARDY

linked with universal beauty and mystery, as the most consecrated objects of traditional song. With undiminished curiosity he retained a marvellously undiminished sensibility; his heart never lost its quick responsiveness and the horn never came over his eyes; custom inured him to no cruelty, nor did the long battering of life lessen his capacity for love or pain. The boy of seventy years ago had not felt more acutely spring's freshness or autumn's grief, brooded with more luxury over the memorials of vanished years, lost himself more utterly in the visionary red of the robin's breast, or the slaty light of wet roads, pitied more spontaneously the victims of man's brutality or Fate's, than this old man of nearly ninety. To the end he was capable of forming new friendships and anxious to read new books. I see it stated in the Press that on his death-bed he had Mr. Walter de la Mare's *The Listeners* read to him several times. The fact is symbolical of his general interest in his juniors, and particularly the younger poets, such as Mr. Sassoon and Mr. Blunden. If he liked their work he liked to see them, and when he saw them he talked to them gaily and naturally as a contemporary to contemporaries.

My own last glimpse of him I shall always especially cherish as it was the best, leaving a picture which embodies the very essence of Hardy the English countryman and Hardy the unexhausted old man. It was at the end of last August. Knowing it would give him pleasure, I brought with me a splendid and celebrated

SUNDAY MORNINGS

singer of sea-shanties and traditional songs—Mr John Goss. From lunch till tea we had music. First there were the Dorset folk-songs. The old man took great delight in supplying alternative versions remembered from his youth, and whenever there was a refrain Hardy's light but vigorous old voice joined in, whilst his hand beat the air to the time. "Well, well, well!" he chuckled, tears of pleasure in his eyes, as each old favourite appeared. One thing led to another; long-neglected music books of the mid-Victorian age were sent for; we carolled "The Mocking-Bird" and other such sentimental ditties. I thought of all the poems he had made on such themes—of William Dewy and "the old bass-viol," of the Argyle Rooms and "the deep Drumpolka's booms," of the dead dances he so much loved to recall, with names like "The Full-Rigged Ship." He was steeped in the social history of England and of his countryside.

These morsels of memory I choose to recall at this moment because there has been a natural tendency on the part of his obituarists to talk about the tragic and pessimistic side of his nature and his work. Of his philosophy enough has been said: historically, he was to be linked with Schopenhauer and with the nineteenth-century rationalists. Temperamentally, he was prone to the contemplation of the passage of things and excessively engaged with the mysteries of evil and of evil chance. He had contracted in his early years a sort of Godless Calvinism, which made all things the puppets of a "President of

THOMAS HARDY

the Immortals," in whom he did not believe: a doctrine at one time strongly and explicitly expressed, but later retained in a softened form, a kind of relic. His plots are certainly grim; his characters are almost always the victims of circumstance; he is always aware of the goal of death at the end of the race of life. But criticism which analyses his plots and his "outlook" is always bound, by virtue of its simplifications, to give a false impression, both of the man and of the atmosphere of his writings. "A great pessimist" is the verdict, as though he were a distracted Leopardi or a paralysed Baudelaire. "The village atheist blaspheming over the village idiot" was the phrase used by a great critic to describe his point-of-view: torn from its context it gives a very false impression of the whole Hardy. For even the gloomiest of his novels is full of delight in nature and in history. Jude may have been foredoomed, but how the author's various pleasure in life comes out as his passage is described: rustic character, landscape, architecture, antiquities, the whole coloured panorama of life! The gay scenes behind the closing tragedy doubtless point the irony, but they are there for their own sakes too.

His delight in observation never failed; he had the roving eye as well as "the musing eye." No monolith could he pass without remembering the Britons, no straight road could he tread without visions of the Roman legionaries. The famous description of Egdon Heath may seem in memory but a sombre and boding landscape;

SUNDAY MORNINGS

return to it and, mingled with the scenery, you will find interesting facts drawn from *Doomsday Book* and the antiquary Leland which at once exhibit Hardy darting curiously from shelf to shelf. And for much of this side of him one does not have to return to his books. It is true that we remember the novels as written around gloomy and ironic plots: but the chief impression they leave in the mind is not that (which critical analysis tends to throw into a high-light) of a sceptic shaking his fist at the cruel stars or brooding over eternal wrong, but a panorama of rustic life in our own day, and in the past: ploughmen, shepherds, woodcutters, milkmaids, fiddlers, gipsies, tipplers in inn parlours, choirs lustily singing in churches, soldiers on leave, villagers on holidays, downs, pastures, orchards, the blue-smoke of cottage chimneys, the glow of open fires, snow, rain, and the sun. *The Three Strangers*, his finest short story, has a grim enough theme, and its suspense makes the heart stand still when one is reading it: to recollection what chiefly remains is the English landscape and the "Dutch interior," a warm low room and rustic festivity.

Even *The Dynasts*, for all the Aeschylean darkness of his main argument, betrays in a thousand places the fact that Hardy's main pre-occupation (whether he knew it or not) was with scene and the movement of life, the recovery of coloured spectacles, debates, battles, panics, popular demonstrations, the oddity and variety of characters, opinions and ranks. A strong

THOMAS HARDY

skeleton was needed to bind together this vast multitude of scenes : but it was not an Aeschylean who did all those humorous dialogues in country speech, and delighted in multiplying the " damns " and " By Gods " of Wellington. It was not Thomas Hardy who coined the phrase about " the blind Fury with the abhorred shears " ; nor was he the first to be habitually prone, in moments of general contemplation, to think of death as a sleep after " life's fitful fever," or as a voyage into " an undiscovered country." " The long day is done and we are for the dark " : fundamentally Shakespeare was as agnostic and as haunted by death as Hardy, and he also was in love with the irrevocable : but he made Falstaff and *As You Like It*, was interested in everything, and was talkative, sociable and high-spirited, as Ben Jonson records. Hardy shared those attributes of character and that universal delight in the shows of life. He constantly forgot that he was prophesying doom when he was presented with the humours of character or the manifold beauties of Nature ; his sombre creed went with an unquenchable faculty of delight.

Shakespeare, however, did not argue ; nor did he load the dice on behalf of destiny. Hardy did, and it has tended to produce a lop-sided picture of him. I once heard a wit remark that no husband in Hardy was ever safely dead. He would create characters who obviously had free-will and then rob them of the results of it, either by some intrusive accident or by some strange breakdown in themselves. He used the long arm

SUNDAY MORNINGS

of coincidence so profusely and trapped his characters so systematically that he worsened Life's worst: panting Fate toiled after him in vain. The almost comic exaggeration of his ironic tricks may be most clearly seen in "Satires of Circumstance," a series of short summarised plots in verse which all, or almost all, record ingeniously contrived disasters, which beat Fate at its own game. The word "game" provides, I think, a clue. Hardy's convictions were perfectly genuine, but he did actually take a kind of pleasure in watching the pranks of Destiny, and working out new and particularly complicated pranks. The glimmer of facetiousness in the very title of *Life's Little Ironies* betrays this predilection for a kind of dreadful joke. It has misled critics of Hardy. He was the most lively of philosophical pessimists and the cheerfullest man that ever frequented churchyards.

The churchyards are much more conspicuous in the verse than in the prose. Mr. E. V. Knox, in his concentrated parody of Hardy's verse, made him speak of:—

The lass I had vowed to meet
By the yew-shaded tomb,

and that is certainly, with a slight distortion, typical. Yet there was nothing morbid about his preoccupation with the tombs. The churchyard was a place of peace, full of grass, old stones, creeping lichens, worn cherubs' heads, curious inscriptions; a place rich with memories of the past, bringing odd and tender tales back to mind,

THOMAS HARDY

half-forgotten beauties, old modes, links with the surging world beyond : the end of sorrows, and, for all its mouldering bones, no more unnatural and repellent to a countryman than the annual withering of the grass, or the black and rotting leaves that pave the woodland floors. "Alas, poor Yorick!" said the gravedigger; but he was a contented, and not a miserable, man.

His preoccupation with the one theme in various forms has been made a charge against his poetry. This criticism ignores several facts. Lyric poetry generally, being prompted by intense feeling, tends to dwell upon that theme, and Hardy's might comprehensibly do so more than most, being, mostly, an old man's verse. His was unique in one regard: no body of poetry comparable with his, whether for force of emotion or for execution, has ever been produced by a man so old. He himself obstinately believed that he had done greater things as a poet than as a novelist: both tone and attitude are characteristic in his *Who's Who* entry: "Hardy, Thomas, author (prose twenty-five years, verse twenty-eight years)." As a young man he wanted, like Meredith, to be a poet, and only necessity drove him into prose. It is conceivable that posterity will agree with him. At any rate the qualities that make his novels memorable are not specifically the qualities of a prose writer, and some of the novels (notably *The Well-Beloved*) which are very weak in structure, credibility and characterisation, are rescued by their incidental intensity and vividness.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Comparison, however, is unnecessary ; we need not underrate the great prose-works in order to demonstrate the power of the poetry. That poetry is extraordinarily poignant, and has an entirely individual music. It has also flaws and strangenesses which are so much a part of it that we would not be without them. Hardy's prose style was normal, though personal. Take one good passage :—

Throughout the blowing of plaintive November winds that note bore a great resemblance to the ruins of human song which remain to the throat of fourscore and ten. It was a worn whisper, dry and papery, and it brushed so distinctly across the ear that, by the accustomed, the material minutiae in which it originated would be realised as by touch. It was the united products of infinitesimal vegetable causes, and these were neither stems, leaves, fruit, blades, prickles, lichen, nor moss.

They were the mummied heath-bells of the past summer, originally tender and purple, now washed colourless by Michaelmas rains, and dried to dead skins by October suns. So low was an individual sound from these that a combination of hundreds only just emerged from silence, and the myriads of the whole declivity reached the woman's ear but as a shrivelled and intermittent recitative.

Movement and phraseology are both in the central tradition. Had Hardy been asked to transpose it into verse the language would probably have been completely altered. Not into an archaic

THOMAS HARDY

and conventionally "poetical" speech; but into a language peculiar to himself. He would very likely have fastened on that one Latin word "*minutiæ*," and decided to use it as a rhyme; then he would have rhymed it to some peculiar word of his own invention like (this he has used) "unbe." There has been discussion lately about an abominable (and to me new) word, "pejorative," which has engaged the attention of the B.B.C. Hardy is the one good poet on record who would have been pleased to use that word in a lyric about love, death or the skylark. One can quite imagine him opening some poignant retrospect with:

I gazed at life and mused awhile
On its process pejorative.

He loaded his verse with ungainly words and cumbersome locutions that were seldom present in his prose; the remarkable thing is that if one surrendered to his voice and his thought, one did not mind them, one even liked them. He could ligest cacophony into music, just as he could, by the force of his sincerity and his feeling, strip the most commonplace and even comic things of their ordinary associations and weave them into a web of musical reflection that brought tears to the eyes. He was completely natural and perennially imaginative. The nightingale and the barndoor fowl lived in one yard for him; he could juxtapose in one plangent verse an old bus-ticket and Helen of Troy.

This is but a slight tribute to a very great

SUNDAY MORNINGS

writer and a very lovable man. There is no space here for any attempt at judging the magnitude and nature of his creative achievement ; only for a gesture of farewell :—

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer
Ledlow late at plough,
Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,
And the Squire, and Lady Susan,
lie in Mellstock churchyard now.

So also his own forbears, whose graves he kept trim and their lettering clean. They are burying him in the Abbey. No doubt they are right to the general wish ; but it seems unsuitable somehow.

January 15, 1928

EDMUND GOSSE

At this moment it is impossible to write adequately on Edmund Gosse; and very difficult to write at all. But it is part of one's trade to describe and dissect one's friends whilst they await burial; and Gosse himself, a master of his trade, never shrank from the duty.

He was in his seventy-ninth year. For sixty years he had been at work in London, and right up to the end the weekly critical essay in the *Sunday Times*, which was the epilogue to his multifarious labours, exhibited qualities of memory, judgment, energy and grace which were the envy of his juniors. But three months ago, erect as ever, he was a pall-bearer at Hardy's funeral, and drew on fifty years of memories for his obituary notice. His career arches from the mid-Victorian period to our own. Sixty years ago, working in the British Museum, he had his first sight of Swinburne, then in the sunrise of his young fame:—

It was on the 9th of July, 1868, rather late in the afternoon, Swinburne had fallen in a fit while working in the reading room of the British Museum, and had cut his forehead superficially against the iron staple of the desk. I was walking along a corridor when I was passed by a couple of silent attendants rapidly

SUNDAY MORNINGS

carrying along in a chair what seemed to be a dead man. I recognised him instantly from his photographs, which now filled the shop windows. His hanging hands, closed eyelids, corpse-white face, and red hair dabbled with blood, presented an appearance of the utmost horror, but I learned, a few days later, that his recovery was rapid and complete.

Within a year or two he was Swinburne's friend, and Rossetti's. From that time to this there was scarcely an eminent figure in literature (though he has said, "I am sorry I never made my bow to George Eliot") with whom he was not on terms of personal friendship. He was the first man in this country to mention Ibsen, and one of the first to praise Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell. Generation after generation moved by. Huxley, the grandfather, passed, Huxley, the grandson, came. Rossetti died, and Browning, Tennyson, and Swinburne. Edmund Gosse was the confident and helper of many, the vigilant observer of all. He, who in the eighteen-seventies was a young civil servant conspiring with Lang and Dobson to revive the old strict French forms of verse, was, in the nineteen-twenties, giving generous praise to Mr. Sassoon and Mr. Blunden (who are very remote from villanelles), and relating them to their predecessors in the English succession.

In his early years he had a difficult time. He was the son of Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S., the grim naturalist who believed that God had scattered prehistoric remains in the rocks as a

temptation to sceptics. The mother died young : the father loved the little pathetic son, but was relentless with him : Edmund Gosse never knew boyhood. He says of his parents :—

Neither knew nor cared about any manifestation of current literature. For each there had been no poet later than Byron, and neither had read a romance since, in childhood, they had dipped into the Waverley Novels, as they appeared in succession. For each the various forms of imaginative and scientific literature were merely means of improvement and profit, which kept the student "out of the world"; gave him full employment, and enabled him to maintain himself. But pleasure was to be found nowhere but in the Word of God, and to the endless discussion of the Scriptures each hurried when the day's work was over. In this strange household the advent of a child was not welcomed, but was borne with resignation. The event was thus recorded in my Father's diary: "E. delivered of a son. Received green swallow from Jamaica."

It is impossible not to admire that father, the self-torturing rock-like man, with the trap-like mouth and the burning eyes under eyebrows which looked like bushes on a cliff. But conflict was inevitable. Gosse recalled an incident that happened in his tenth year. His father read Virgil to him, and came upon the most enchanting of all lines. The child asked for them to be explained; explained they were, but without feeling :—

SUNDAY MORNINGS

But a miracle had been revealed to me, the incalculable, the amazing beauty which could exist in the sound of verses. My prosodical instinct was awakened, quite suddenly that dim evening, as my Father and I sat alone in the breakfast-room after tea, serenely accepting the hour, for once, with no idea of exhortation or profit. Verse, "a breeze mid blossoms playing," as Coleridge says, descended from the roses as a moth might have done, and the magic of it took hold of my heart for ever. I persuaded my Father, who was a little astonished at my insistence to repeat the lines over and over again. At last my brain caught them, and as I walked in Benny's garden, or as I hung over the tidal pools at the edge of the sea, all my inner being used to ring out with the sound of

Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.

There was affection on both sides, but war was inevitable. That dreadful and touching strife is described with utter realism yet great sensitiveness in *Father and Son*, Edmund Gosse's masterpiece. The early fight against an ugly and cruel religion and a strong bigoted father left permanent marks on him. All alone, young and ignorant, he had to wage war to preserve his independence, his right to lead his own life and seek those worlds of beauty and amenity, glimpses of which can be concealed from no child fit to receive them.

The conflict steeled his will. When he was young he looked middle-aged; when he was old he still looked middle-aged; it was as though the mere will were preserving the agility of his

limbs, the glitter of his eyes, the set of his features, the very colour of his pale hair. Stevenson, returning to the Savile Club in 1927, would have found no great alteration in the appearance of the friend of forty years ago, no baldness, no white beard, no retrospective mumbling: but the same man, looking much the same, still vivacious, critical, satirical, keenly interested in the day's creation and the day's intrigue, still given to sudden bursts of unbounded kindness. He would also find him there at lunch on the same day of the week: for the early discipline and the early conflict left Gosse with habits of intense regularity. Nobody ever answered letters more punctually or more neatly than he. What he gave he expected: there was a severe frown and a caustic remark (*experto crede*) for anyone who turned up five minutes late at a committee of which he was chairman.

He had himself completely in hand: the repression which that involved led, at times, to a certain irritability: and, as the child had had to fight for its life with its father, in a lonely cottage or drab London lodgings, so the man was always ready at a moment's notice to take up any gauntlet and reply to any real or apparent insult or invasion. He did not suffer fools gladly; and, fools or no, he had no use for his enemies. In middle life he had some bitter controversies: he made enemies sometimes because of his understandable dislike of the extremer forms of religious dogmatism, sometimes because he replied to affronts with affronts, sometimes because of that

SUNDAY MORNINGS

difference between the artist who trusts to his memory for his facts and the plodding scholar who verifies his facts but is no artist. The most notorious instance was the fight with Churton Collins, who pulled Gosse's Clark Lectures to pieces because of trifling errors of fact. Always during controversy he gave rather better than he received: having a very pungent manner of expressing contempt.

His contempt was not restricted to print; he said things that got about, and he was not averse from saying things in the hearing of his antagonists. I have heard a gentleman defined (it is one of the thousand inadequate definitions of an impalpable poetic thing) as a man who is never rude except deliberately. Gosse, whose ordinary manners had an eighteenth-century polish, was never rude except deliberately, but he was often rude. I have seen men flush and shrivel at remarks about themselves which were meant to reach their ears; some old score wiped out, and very adequately, at last. And it didn't matter who they were. When Gosse was made Librarian of the House of Lords, those whom he had annoyed, or who were jealous of him, murmured that at last he would be happy. The implied suggestions were grossly and ludicrously unwarrantable. He liked to be behind the scenes, to be cognisant of affairs (though, at bottom, indifferent to politics); he had a Johnsonian regard for the usefulness of "rank" and "subordination"; and a belief (fortified by his knowledge of the great periods in human history) that

in a healthy society the best elements of all kinds should mingle at the apex. Prime Ministers and Field Marshals were encouraged at his table ; but they were met in a world where distinctions disappeared, and experiences were unaffectedly exchanged.

He liked the idea of dukes, and he was prepared to like a duke ; but woe betide the duke who annoyed him. Gosse's claws were impartially ready, and the boor or the booby would feel them. Less often, perhaps, of recent years. The fight was o'er, the battle won ; and a new mellowness and tolerance came over Gosse. He was the doyen of men-of-letters ; a wanderer from a past age who had sailed into a serene harbour and (miraculously) was interested in the harbour when he got there. He had no longer any foes ; he was friends with his juniors and with the sons of his juniors ; a perennially young patriarch basking in the sunshine after many storms ; jocularly calling his youngest friends " Bolsheviks," but not meaning it ; talking sympathetically even about dead antagonists, though always skilful in suggesting their limitations.

Yet the change involved no diminution of freshness. In his last year or two he was physically frailer and wore a shade over one eye ; probably he had skipped up stairs and library ladders longer than any human being, with impunity, can. But to the last, if I gave him my arm across the street, or carried out any similar office of the comparatively young to the eminent septuagenarian, I could not help feeling that he was

SUNDAY MORNINGS

merely pretending to be old, and that this was all a game between us. What a tribute is that to his humanity and courage!

It is difficult for the present generation to realise that Gosse's first vogue was as a poet. His *Collected Poems* (published, originally, by his old friend, William Heinemann) are well worth study. A great deal of charming light verse will be found there, and certain premonitory works of a more serious kind. When he wrote his preface, in 1911, he said:—

If I am a poet at all, I belong to the age of the Franco-German War, of the introduction of Japanese Art into Europe, of the discoveries of Huxley and Hæckel, and of the Oxford lectures of Matthew Arnold. I smile at this list of names, as a buttercup might smile to find itself rooted in a battlefield; but such is the intellectual topography of these rhymes.

This was too modest. In many of the poems—such as “A Year,” “Lying in the Grass,” and that beautiful poem about the moths, the lantern, and the lady, in the *Oxford Book*—Gosse was a link between Matthew Arnold (who was a link with Wordsworth) and those modern “Georgians” who combine rhythmical fluidity and variety with exact observation of natural fact and the illumination of a momentary emotion—Wordsworth's general philosophy having gone. In later years he wrote little verse, though there was a fine poem during the war: he looked back on his career as poet as though it had been another

man's. For so much had happened since.

His industry, throughout his long life, was immense; yet his standards were never relaxed. There was the big edition of the *Life and Letters* of Donne—in whose first editions and MSS. his choice library (mostly bought with his spare shillings when he was young) was rich. There were "lives"—Gray, Congreve, Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, Swinburne, and others. There were a score of collections of critical essays and portraits, whose subjects ranged from the Greek ancients to the English moderns. There were semi-text-books on Jacobean, Eighteenth-century, and Modern English Literature. There were interpretations of the authors of France and Scandinavia, many of whom he had known. In middle life he was one of the official translators to the Board of Trade. With one hand, as it were, he was writing Blue-books about industrial conditions in Germany, and with the other he was introducing English readers to the unknown authors of Denmark and Norway. A swarm of introductions and pamphlets will also embarrass his bibliographers. The production was enormous, yet it was (until recent years) all done in the spare time of a busy official, and none of it was slipshod. First to last Gosse hardly ever wrote an inelegant sentence, and never wrote even a newspaper article which was vamped and second-hand. He was himself, with all his resources and taste, whenever he took pen in hand.

As a critic there is nobody exactly like him

SUNDAY MORNINGS

in our literature. He was universally curious, always detached, yet always watchful for the new: erudite without solemnity, enthusiastic without fanaticism. There was no book on which he could not throw light: even when he was impercipient (as with Francis Thompson, whose Catholicism and archaic affectations obscured for Gosse his genius) he had always something shrewd and telling to say. It must be agreed, however (and he himself was aware of it), that where he most excelled was in discovering the man behind the work and (where he had seen his subjects) in physical and spiritual portraiture. Sketches such as he has left of Christina Rossetti and Lord de Tabley (there are scores of others, of all types of person) are unparalleled in our literature: only in French can their likenesses be found.

Gosse was an extraordinary observer, and could record what he saw in language of the utmost exactitude and economy: he had, also, a heart for goodness and an amused eye for oddness. His self-possession was complete: the openings of his essays always gave one the feeling that he had just sharpened a quill and had carefully considered all he was going to say before beginning to write. Here is a recent example, taken at random from an essay written in Byron's Centenary year:—

While everybody is discussing the merits and demerits of the too-famous "Pilgrim of Eternity," it is probable that little attention will be diverted to an interesting figure which had its day of notoriety. When Byron died at

EDMUND GOSSE

Missolonghi, the child of an eccentric hide-merchant and Primitive Christian at Cranbrook was a fortnight old. This child was Sydney Dobell, afterwards the author of *The Roman* and *Balder*. From early infancy this unfortunate babe was dedicated to an "apostolic mission." His parents were sternly religious, and they were extreme Radicals in politics. It was a moment in England when everybody who was at all serious was beginning to think about the evidences of Christianity and the doom of tyrants. The elder Dobells were united in the hope that their eldest son would distinguish himself in both fields of action, and that infant, who was dreadfully precocious, nervous, and over-strained, ardently responded.

There you have an example of Gosse's ordinary movement and his ordinary temper. There was always melody in his sentences and order in his paragraphs. These same qualities gave an extraordinary charm to his talk. With Gosse present, and in form, no other man need wish to talk—not that he ever desired to dominate conversation or was anything but an attentive listener. Conversation was creation to him: there was no midnight oil, but care and choice operated in front of one, and very rapidly. He hesitated sometimes for the right word, but never so long as we should have hesitated ourselves. The terse, illuminating, sometimes malicious, sometimes tenderly whimsical, comments poured out in deliciously uninterrupted succession. The retorts came pat and perfectly shaped. The

SUNDAY MORNINGS

anecdotes were told with wonderful vividness and perfect emphasis: a scene unrolling, a character exhibited, a point perfectly made. Did he keep a diary? He was dark about it, and evaded questions. But if he did, Horace Walpole's *Letters* will have a rival; and Gosse's already eminent place will be more eminent still.

This farewell is a note, and inadequate. Especially so from one who for many years received nothing but kindness and affection from him, and returned this last in full measure. I have said nothing of the home, crowded with memories, which was always so hospitable; though I may say that it was not only for the immense pleasure of seeing Gosse that the least and the greatest of his friends went, on Sundays, to the house overlooking the lake in Regent's Park. I have mentioned very few of his many "contacts," and have not even glanced at the great variety of his activities outside writing—for he was a literary statesman, and presided over very many learned and philanthropic institutions. Nor have I said anything about the perfect polish of his public speech. This is but what the aged Horace Walpole, in his last letter, requested: a handful of rue for the grave. And let the last words be Gosse's own, from a poem he wrote as a young man:—

And if, among the noiseless grasses, Death
Should come behind and take away my breath,
I should not rise as one who sorroweth;

EDMUND GOSSE

For I should pass, but all the world would be
Full of desire and young delight and glee,
And why should men be sad through loss of me ?

The light is dying ; in the silver blue,
The young moon shines from her bright window
through :

The mowers all are gone, and I go too.

May 20, 1928.

ARTHUR BENSON'S DIARY

INTROSPECTION, however salutary up to a point, may be overdone, even when one proceeds from a resolute determination to know oneself and emend oneself. A man, looking within, forgets that individual character is a relative thing. Mr. Lubbock, in one of the many wise and beautiful passages that he contributes to this book (*The Diary of Arthur Christopher Benson*), observes how utterly unaware Arthur Benson was of the figure he cut in other people's eyes. The more he depicted himself the more unlike was the picture to the social being we knew. But there is more than that. A man, looking within himself in too concentrated and habitual a way, forgets what other people are like, tends to think his faults are peculiar to himself, and loses perspective, judging his acts and tendencies purely by absolute and often absurd standards instead of in the light of normal human achievement and possibility. Like the rest of us Benson had plenty of lamentable propensities, but we begin to think the habit of self-reproach to be one of them when we find this kindly man, who led a life of unintermitted activity and devoted service, continually condemning himself for coldness, self-indulgence and indolence. He never, except during his melancholy periods of nervous breakdown, rested from his literary labours.

ARTHUR BENSON'S DIARY

Almost the whole of his adult life was spent in administration and teaching at Eton and Cambridge: yet the vast array of his books would do credit to a professional writer living in a hermitage. He drove himself incessantly: and now the fact is revealed that from 1897 to his death he kept a diary so voluminous that the whole of it amounts to four million words and would fill forty large volumes. I imagine, judging from the experience of one who saw him occasionally over a period of twenty years, but knew him less well than many hundreds of his friends, that his letters, if collected, would probably fill a hundred and sixty such volumes. "Nulla dies sine linea" is a reasonable ambition for a man who wishes to be really industrious: but a thousand lines in the free hours of a busy day were not enough to satisfy Benson. He was at everybody's disposal, always willing to answer as fully and helpfully as possible the most tiresome request for advice by an undergraduate or the most exacting questionnaire from a total stranger from Texas. He had his faults, and of most of them he was acutely aware: but he did not know how fully he realised his aspiration to be a slave to duty, and the fact that the impulse behind his public services and personal kindnesses was not always pure robbed him, in his own eyes, of all credit for them. His self-examinations are all coloured by the paradoxical view that there is no merit in good actions done "against the grain." He, who mingled daily with crowds of people, suffered from an excessive seclusion with

SUNDAY MORNINGS

his own problems ; had he ever been able to break down the barrier of his reserve and let sympathy in, he would have been happier.

He would also have been happier had he ever been able to communicate himself as well in the books he published as he did in the private diary now published posthumously, and obviously left with an eye to publication. As time goes on, more of this journal will presumably be "released." It seems probable that these miscellaneous records and musings will give him the position in literary history which he was conscious that he had not won by his formal compositions. In his remarks about his own work he does tend to ignore the solid value of his critical books. But his estimates of the nature of his achievement as a poet and popular essayist conform precisely with those of his most hostile critics, and, though prone to over-pessimism, do contain the truth. Thirty years ago he delivered a final verdict on his own verse :—

I don't think I have the real spring. I think I have a certain power of feeling the interest of certain aspects of nature ; I have a somewhat microscopic eye, and find more beauty in hedgerows, deserted quarries, little pools and streams, railway-cuttings, back-gardens, than I do in great panoramas of mountains or in sensational prospects. I have a certain facility in language, and now and then a gleam of artistic excitement. But this is not enough, and I must, I think, resign all hopes of a poetical future. I fancy that two or three of

ARTHUR BENSON'S DIARY

my poems may get included in Victorian anthologies, but I cannot be a "bright particular star."

"All I can do to help," he exclaims in disgust in 1910, when he has suddenly been brought against "the sorrows of the world," is "to write timid and chatty articles for maiden aunts," and the best he can say of his public after lecturing to a section of it is:—

It is odd to have really met, face to face, the people who read my books and love them—who think them original and high-minded and sincere and beautiful—who like the donnish and the aristocratic flavour, the flavour picked up in episcopal palaces and county society and Eton and Cambridge—and believe they have really found the charm of culture. It is humiliating in a sense, because I don't think it is a critical or an intellectual audience; but it is there, and its real and urgent goodwill is there.

There is the oddity of it. So celebrated an author first encountering a crowd of his readers, late in life, and in a milieu he had never entered before: whilst his friends and colleagues, those who prized him for his mind and heart, his genuine practical wisdom, the merriment, imagination, and inspiration of his talk—did not, as a rule, read his books, and did not pretend to.

They, above all, will prize the *Diary*, though: for they will find in it much that they knew in him, and the absence of which in his other books

SUNDAY MORNINGS

was so puzzling. It isn't only that there is here the intimate record of an inner life, the private confession book of a much more amusing and iridescent Amiel, but that a high literary gift is powerfully used. Observation, memory, description of scenes and persons beheld with the physical eye, were Benson's great gifts as an artist. His public use of them in his lifetime was severely limited, in part by a code which forbade him to give pain, in part by a shrinking from exposure to controversy and criticism. He sedulously cultivated safety. His gifts of description were unsuitably employed in fiction, where his scenes tended to be hazy and remote ; and in his essays he occupied himself with the more agreeable aspects of truth. Then, almost daily, he retired in solitude to his diary, and (as it were) secreted the vivid and candid thoughts that found no other outlet. The exercise of frankness braced him : his very vignettes of landscapes have a clarity and terseness lacking in the pleasantly soporific pages of the essays ; there is a harder style and a blunter humour. And many of the pictures of societies and persons are as strong and brilliant as they could be.

The total value of his portraits we naturally cannot yet assess. Privately, Benson, if anything, rather specialised in the wrinkles and warts of his subjects ! Mr. Lubbock's discretion has, very properly, allowed very little that is at all striking to escape into print where living persons are concerned. The glimpses of the dead which he has permitted himself to " pass " suggest a

ARTHUR BENSON'S DIARY

storehouse to be opened later. They range from bright little vignettes such as those of Sir Charles Stanford, Queen Victoria, Mr. Chamberlain, and Professor Ker, to a splendid seventeenth century "character" of Oscar Browning, most bewildering and attractive of monsters, and pictures of Henry James, which give us every roll of his eye, every pant of his breath, every accent of his talk. "I have a close observation and a photographic eye," he once observes, characteristically proceeding to decry these gifts. They are, however, the chief desiderata in a diarist, and the lapse of time will steadily increase the value which people will attach to these variegated pages.

It is impossible to conclude without mentioning the extraordinary quality of Mr. Lubbock's introduction, which not merely recovers the physical presence and voice of Benson, but outlines his character with unusual courage and a still more unusual power of denoting fine shades of temperament and motive which might have seemed impossible to convey.

December 12, 1926.

JOHN MORLEY AS A WRITER

JOHN MORLEY was a man of many activities, all of which had a common centre. It is impossible to discuss anything he did without reference to everything else. As much in his essay on Wordsworth, as in his correspondence with Lord Minto about Indian reform, the whole man is present: all his thoughts and all his feelings; the historian of Cromwell is the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the biographer of Diderot is the member for Newcastle. Both in his range and in his self-consistency he was more representative of the last century than of this. He spent his youth in the world of Browning, Bagehot and Mill, George Eliot and George Lewes, Matthew Arnold and Victor Hugo, Stephen, Huxley and Mazzini. He survived into an age when it is common form that politicians should know no history, that scientists should be illiterate, that economists should not be able to write, that moralists should have no intellects and intellectuals no morals. As he saw it, a strenuous scepticism has declined into indifferentism, and principle into opportunism; he looked back to the mid-Victorian epoch as Adam may have looked back into Eden; both in his virtues and his limitations he belonged to that time, and to the Philosophic Radicals of that time who perhaps showed both the virtues and the limitations at their highest. The greatest

JOHN MORLEY AS A WRITER

qualities of his school were their honesty, their industry, their devotion to the welfare of the race, their scorn of selfish indulgence, their firm grasp of broad historical truth; their chief defects were a certain frigidity of manner, an excessive dogmatism, a defect of imaginative sympathy, a remoteness from the dreams, enjoyments, passions of the ordinary man. It did not take all sorts to make their world: they saw all sorts around them and were perpetually uncomfortable because of it. Falstaff, Keats and Montrose were equally beyond the range of their sympathies: they would have been happier with Marcus Aurelius. But a nobler sect of men have never appeared in England.

Of all the school Morley was perhaps the most practical. He understood where he did not approve; the necessity of accommodation was almost one of his principles, so surely did he keep it before him without losing sight of the others, and his wide knowledge of history made him as sceptical of an earthly millennium as he was of a heavenly. With stoical resolution he set to work to discover what was most likely to benefit the race, if anything could, and to put his discoveries into practice. He was confessedly a realist as much as an idealist; lies, whether brutal or cowardly, were odious to him; the whole of his works preach the gospel that a man should lie neither to others nor to himself.

I once met an American who endeavoured to proselytise me for a new society, to be called "The World-Union of Fact-Facers." Morley

SUNDAY MORNINGS

might well have been President of that body, and, being of the complexion that he was, facing facts was harder for him than for many people, as he disliked more facts. He says of Charles I : " His fault—and no statesman can have a worse—was that he never saw things as they were." In the light of that conception Morley tried to live. Great Radical, democrat, agnostic as he was, minority man as he usually found himself, nobody was more alive than he to the defects of his own associates and the consequences of his own measures. " That conjuror's word, ' the People,' " he remarks somewhere. Somewhere else he observes that the spread of newspapers and reading has been, in a way, a disaster for thought. " Nothing," he says in *Cromwell*, " in all the known world of politics is so intractable as a band of zealots conscious that they are in a minority, yet armed by accident with the powers of a majority " ; by the same token " to impose broad views upon the narrow is one of the things a party leader exists for."

There was a time when his opponents used to make a bogey of him : he was a Revolutionary Atheist, they said, a man of blood. There never was a man less revolutionary ; it was largely because he had written lives of Voltaire and Rousseau which his opponents had not read, and because in a moment of youthful indiscretion he had once spelt the name of the Deity with a small " g." Wild men of any sort he detested. He catalogues his masters with pride : " Burke, Austin, Mill, Turgot, Comte"—what strange

JOHN MORLEY AS A WRITER

sponsors for the "theories and principles of Terror." He faced the facts, and amongst others the fact that great changes cannot be produced quickly. He hoped, rather than believed, that the world might be slowly transformed by the application of his political principles. Those principles, for him and his school, were honestly founded upon a reading of history and an observation of men. He had no use for "the abstract, absolute, geometric, unhistoric, peremptory notions and reasonings that formed the stock-in-trade of most, though not quite all, of the French revolutionists"; expediency and convenience must determine the application of principles. The criterion was that certain causes were shown by history to have certain effects; to recognise this, he says, and to act upon it, is morality. Only on history could a sound ethic be based; not upon what he describes in his *Diderot* as "the shifting sands and rotting foundations of theology."

Here there is certainly room for discussion: some would say that his practice was wider than his precept. Morley's hatred—the most passionate thing about him—of cruelty and injustice did not solely originate in his reasoned conclusion that these things do not work. No amount of examples of persecutions which had brought no retribution of disorder would have made him an advocate of persecutions. It might even be argued that all these high-minded Rationalists of the last age had inherited the Christian ethics without the theology; and it is a question for

consideration whether (and if so why) those ethics can go on breeding for generations without some sort of metaphysical background behind them. This did not agitate Morley in his prime, though he seems to have thought of it in his closing years ; he had his convictions, he was persuaded that they all had a strictly reasonable and scientific foundation, and he devoted his life to their application.

In his essay on Mill he speaks of Mill's "rare union of moral ardour with a calm and settled mind." Here we find the ideal at which he himself aimed : equanimity, self-control, steady purpose, a temperate and equal name. He secured it ; he lived consistently on a high plane, intellectual and moral, in the true Roman manner. A touch of superiority he was unable to avoid ; invective was not in his line, but his books are studded with briefly contemptuous remarks about all those—and they are, alas, the majority of mankind—who could not live in the thin, bracing air of his peaks. Intellectual laziness, hysteria, "moral valetudinarianism," wilfulness, the abandonment to sense : these are perpetually flagellated in parentheses.

Always, however, without abandonment, without the volcanic ferocity of Carlyle, the picturesque exuberance of Ruskin, the playful humour of Matthew Arnold. A word was enough, a stinging and deserved word in passing ; he then proceeded with his argument. He had the calm of complete self-confidence. He was more than ordinarily certain about wisdom and unwisdom, never in

danger of conversion, schooled against the escape of feverish emotion, though never without heart.

Morley's style was certainly the man: cool, lucid, uniform, reasonable. In his later years, and especially in his speeches, he showed a slight fondness for the deliberate invention of terms and phrases which were not often successful. The "quackous fungoids" which Mr. Baldwin has been quoting was one of them. I cannot think it good. The body of his writings is free from such diversions; the style may be called monotonous; if so, it is monotonous at a very high level. The lack of variety is a result of his lofty intellectual ideals; all things must be viewed in one temper, without indulgence in passion, sensual luxury or levity; there can be none of the wantonness of ornament or of surprise; the prime importance of substance must never be forgotten in the delights of imagery and rhythm. Nevertheless, though economical, austere, and even, Morley's style was not bare and cold. He had a good ear, though no great range of tune; his immense knowledge provided him with a great variety of strictly relevant illustration; and he had learned from his master, Burke, the value, in philosophic writings, of metaphor, both as illumination and as relief. His images seldom had that poetic glow and force that we find often in Burke's and sometimes in Walter Bagehot's; but they have a mild warmth and are always appropriate. So even is the texture of his prose, so great is his self-control, so severe his concentration on the work in hand, so great is his distaste for verbal display that

SUNDAY MORNINGS

quotation to illustrate his characteristics of expression is very difficult—or too easy.

You do not mark particular sentences or paragraphs in his works because of their music or wit, but because of their sense ; he is always neat and strong as a writer of English, but it was to him strictly an instrument for instruction and discussion. I may quote as an example of the movement of his prose one of those passages in which he deals with a theme which always tinged his writing with a strong, though restrained, emotion, It is from the essay on Mill :—

Then Mr. Mill's life as disclosed to us in these pages has been called joyless by that sect of religious partisans whose peculiarity is to mistake boisterousness for unction. Was the life of Christ Himself, then, so particularly joyful ? Can the life of any man be joyful who sees and feels the tragic miseries and hardly less tragic follies of the earth ? The old Preacher, when he considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and beheld the tears of such as were oppressed and had no comforter, therefore praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive, and declared him better than both, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. Those who are willing to trick their understandings and play fast and loose with words may, if they please, console themselves with the fatuous commonplaces of a philosophic optimism. They may, with eyes tight shut, cling to the notion that they live in the best

JOHN MORLEY AS A WRITER

of all possible worlds, or, discerning all the anguish that may be compressed into three-score years and ten, still try to accept the Stoic's paradox, that pain is not an evil. Or, most wonderful and most common of all, they may find this joy of which they talk, in meditating on the moral perfections of the omnipotent Being for whose diversion the dismal panorama of all the evil work done under the sun, was bidden to unfold itself, and who sees that it is very good. Those who are capable of a continuity of joyous emotion on these terms, may well complain of Mr. Mill's story as dreary; and so may the school of Solomon, who commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing than to eat and to drink, and to be merry. People, however, who are prohibited by their intellectual conditions from finding full satisfaction either in spiritual raptures or in pleasures of sense, may think the standard of happiness which Mr. Mill sought and reached, not unacceptable, and not unworthy of being diligently striven after.

That passage represents him at his most eloquent, his most rapid. And there is a great deal of Morley in it; his downrightness, his honesty, his cultivation, his concern for the suffering, his irony, a touch of that intolerance which was no monopoly of his opponents, a touch of that kind of pride which it is difficult for the "stern moralist," the "*mens conscia recti*" to escape. It is good and sustained writing, but Morley's books, if they continue to be read, will not be read by those who do not primarily care about their arguments.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

They must stand or fall as the work of a historian, a biographer, a philosophical critic of men and their deeds, not as the work of a "man of letters." It is difficult to discuss which of them will survive. The *Life of Gladstone* goes without saying ; it is not one of the greatest of biographies, but it is a reference library to the controversies of half a century. The *Miscellanies*, good reading though they are, and interesting though many of them may be as documents in the history of philosophic Radicalism in particular and Victorian thought in general, have lost their freshness to a far greater extent than the contemporary essays of Matthew Arnold. The celebrated essay *On Compromise* seems to me, if I may diffidently say so, no more than an able piece of journalism. The *Life of Cobden* will be useful to the historian of the epoch ; but it is rather a long Cobdenite tract than the portrait of a man or of an age. Morley's finest books, in my opinion, are the *Voltaire*, the *Rousseau*, the *Diderot*, and the *Cromwell* : the *Burke*, good as it is, is not on the same scale. In all those lives the material is splendidly marshalled, and vivid, coherent, convincing pictures of their subjects are painted.

The *Cromwell*, a magnificently honest book, had Gardiner and Carlyle behind it ; the French lives, so far as this country is concerned, were pioneer work and pioneer work which is not likely to be superseded. Their public is likely to be limited : the number of persons in this country who take an interest in Denis Diderot is unfortunately small. But they are and will remain standard

JOHN MORLEY AS A WRITER

books : a collection which alone would have been held sufficient to justify the existence of a professional writer giving his whole time to the work. Yet these, and all the rest of the great bulk of his writings, were little more than the spare-time products of a man who had one great career as a working journalist and another as a practical statesman. So laborious and full a life, so constant an adherence to the lofty conception of public service and fidelity to truth, must command our respect, even reverence, both for the man and for the school of thought, whatever its limitations, out of which he grew. At the end he had done his duty and was content that controversy should be suspended. His last written words, at the end of his *Recollections*, leave him in "an autumn reverie," walking over the common with his dog and wondering whether all the great teachers of his age, all long dead, had done any more than the Churches :—

Now and then I paused as I sauntered slow over the fading heather. My little humble friend squat on her haunches, looking wistfully up, eager to resume her endless hunt, after she knows not what, just like the chartered metaphysician. So to my home in the falling daylight. . . .

September 30, 1923.

THE NINETIES AND JOHN LANE

THERE have been a good many books about "the Nineties," but none satisfactory until this one, *The Beardsley Period*, by Osbert Burdett. Mr. Holbrook Jackson's was a useful compilation, summarising the work of a great many authors; the other treatises have been less complete than his, and no more critical. Mr. Osbert Burdett, at last, has attempted to define precisely what is meant by the term, and to explain precisely what led to the attitude. It is one of the ablest, most amusing, and most excellently written works of criticism which has been published for years, and if its author betrays more sympathy with the movement and more admiration for some of its lesser artists than most of us feel inclined to grant, it is only such a man who could have put the case for it well, or would have been moved to put the case for it at all.

In spite of his title, Mr. Burdett explains at the very start that "the nineties is not a period, but a point of view," and it is this point of view which he endeavours to expound and explain. Many great artists were living in the "Beardsley period" who cannot be said to have belonged to it, though the influences which played upon it moved them also. Mr. Bridges, Mr. Kipling, Mr. Hardy, Henry James, Meredith, lived through the time, but are hardly kin to Beardsley and

THE NINETIES AND JOHN LANE

Ernest Dowson ; Mrs. Meynell may, as Mr. Burdett suggests, be linked to them by her fastidious prose, but is poles apart in temperament and opinion. In a series of very brilliant chapters he examines the background, the French influences at work, Beardsley, Wilde, the lesser poets of the movement, the prose writers, and the periodicals. Here and there one is inclined to protest that he has underrated the poems of a John Davidson or underrated the drawings of somebody else. But in general way he is both just and illuminating ; no better criticism of Beardsley has never been written, and nowhere is there to be found so sage or so elegant an appreciation of Wilde. And in the end, after all his descriptions of Beardsley and Wilde, Crackanhorpe and George Egerton, Francis Adams and Mr. Symons, Ella d'Arcy and Dowson, the early Max and Whistler, he summarises the whole movement as a continuation of that reaction against modern society which was expressed by Swinburne and the Pre-Raphaelites. It was the culmination of the movement to escape ; and it represented an attitude of mind which, in varying degrees, must exist in all societies, since all societies are imperfect. " The Aesthetic temper," he says,

is mainly one which enjoys without creating anything more permanent than conversation, which is content with all that has been already done in art, and dreads the conditions out of which all new art, except pure poetry, is produced, however much they may be capable of appreciating the results attained by it. Un-

SUNDAY MORNINGS

fitted for commercial pursuits, which it is their point of honour to despise, and imperfectly endowed with creative imagination, these men fall between the two worlds of art and industry.

This describes the perennial type which will cherish the work of the nineties ; but some of the men of the nineties were artists with very strong creative imaginations, fleeing from one world to the other. These were in retreat from a society of a particular kind :—

Mr. Yeats turned from London to Dublin, and from Dublin to the cabins of the peasants as hungrily as Beardsley turned to watch the crowds around *petits chevaux* in the casino, Dowson to cabmen's shelters, Johnson to a library, or Wilde to Mayfair.

Anywhere, anywhere, out of a world of factories and limited liability companies. All artists and sensitives must abominate this civilisation, in which the towns spread, work is robbed of its interest, and the corporation, which has no soul to be damned and no body to be kicked, covers the whole country with its inhuman and loveless products. The difference between these refugees and the rest is not in this distaste, but in natural vigour and in philosophy. Temperamentally they were able to run away, turn their backs, and talk of sin, Cleopatra or Giotto ; philosophically, they saw no reason why they should do anything else. To another class of mind it appears that it is absurd to be driven by reaction into a futile

THE NINETIES AND JOHN LANE

whimpering; that the sins of industrialism do not justify a recourse to the sins which shock the industrialists; that man, if he was put here for anything at all (and it seems obvious to them that he was) was put here to do the best with the circumstances in which he finds himself; that it is better to die trying to reform things than to die bleating about them; and that any art is barren which is content to ignore the fate of the mass of humanity. Faced with a society like ours, a man may refuse, or he may accept, or he may do his best to change what he dislikes, enormous though the task may be. The choice is there; either way he dies after seventy years; either way a man of genius may produce good work; but the greatest work has always been done by those who have accepted contemporary conditions, and rejected contemporary conclusions. The æsthetes are a kind of revolutionaries who are so futile that they do not even try to blow anything up. That I have been talking about life and not about art is the inevitable result of reading Mr. Burdett's explanation of the "art for art's sake" movement.

Canon Ainger, at the height of the activity which Mr. Burdett describes, wrote an epigram:—

I would we had more of the godly soul
And less of the Bodley Head.

The *Beardsley Period* might almost as well have been called *The Bodley Head Period*; and in the week that has seen the publication of the

finest extant explanation of it, the founder of the Bodley Head has died. *The Yellow Book* was the result of a meeting between John Lane, Henry Harland, and Beardsley; he was the publisher of the *Keystone Series*: and the majority of the characteristic works of the movement appeared with his imprint. He was, for a time, not only publisher to Beardsley and his congeners, but publisher in chief to the English poets; it was possible twenty years ago to find in young men's rooms presentable little libraries composed almost entirely of Lane's publications. I knew John Lane for nearly twenty years, and I may be permitted here to say a word about him.

Who drives fat oxen need not himself be fat; and nobody could have looked and talked less like a decadent or a languishing æsthete than John Lane. He sprang from a Devonshire yeoman stock and entered a London office in his late teens. Something in him—primarily a passion for human character rather than for literary art, I think—made him a book-collector from the start; and by the time he went into partnership with Elkin Mathews he had a library large enough to represent his share of their joint capital. The partnership broke up after a few years, and Lane, thirty years ago, suddenly became the most enterprising publisher in London, publisher of all those surprising new works which were delighting the few and scarifying the many. Those who knew him casually in later years sometimes expressed surprise to find that he had a violent dislike for Wilde, and that he was not especially eager to discuss

THE NINETIES AND JOHN LANE

the peculiar qualities of many of the poets whom he published. They looked at the active little man with the small, pointed beard, the shrewd, narrow eyes, and the ruddy colour, and diagnosed him as one who had been thrown into contact with the " 'nineties " movement by accident and made a very good thing out of it. They were wrong: for Lane also, in his manner, was an artist and an enthusiast.

He was a " keen man of business," and an accomplished bargainer. Nobody can succeed in the publishing, or, perhaps, in any, trade without those attributes. My own direct business relations with him were slight and occasional; I found him generous. But he did possess, what was commonly imputed to him, a considerable faculty for calculation and barter. The point was, however, that even as a publisher, a business man, he did not regard his successes in bargaining as means towards the accumulation of a hoard: they were the necessary concomitants, firstly of the opportunity for spending his leisure hours in a congenial way, and secondly for publishing good books on which he knew, or thought, he would lose. From time to time I (and this, no doubt, was the experience of others) told him casually of some author who had written a book which ought to be published but would not pay. " Send him along," was his invariable answer. The " books of the 'nineties " were published by him not because he had a preternatural assurance that they would pay, but because he, or somebody whom he trusted, thought them good. And for

SUNDAY MORNINGS

all that his own dominant tastes lay in another direction ; there was a bond of a sort between him and those artists whom Mr. Burdett has so admirably explained. It was a bond with the better and more real side of them. He also did not like this civilisation, its ugliness, its hostility to the individual ; he made his terms with it, but his heart was elsewhere. Lane was a countryman to the last ; a countryman whose strong social hankerings would have been satisfied by the towns of the eighteenth century, by Bath and Soho, but were not by the cities of the nineteenth. There was something deeper than the desire to exploit something exploitable in his selection, for business premises, of a house which backed on the Albany—premises, by the way, the walls of which were crowded with eighteenth-century portraits which he had picked up here, there, and everywhere. Lane was an eighteenth-century gossip, antiquary and connoisseur ; and he was a nineteenth-century countryman from Devon exploring the withering of rural life ; these things in him were permanent below the enterprising business man who crossed the Atlantic so many times on missions of salesmanship, and would, when on holiday, stop at the smallest draper-bookseller's shop in order to scan the stock and present the tenant with his latest catalogue.

Lane's native county happened also to be mine, a county the acknowledged qualities of which are such that I need not trouble to expound them. Last September we spent a week together touring it : I drove the car, and Lane sat beside me

THE NINETIES AND JOHN LANE

talking—for at seventy he had the ardour of a boy—incessantly, even at the dangerous corners and in the thick of the traffic of Exeter High Street and Bideford Bridge. We went to his ancestral neighbourhood and then to my own ; we called for lunch at country houses, and dined and slept at country hotels. In the intervals we admired landscapes, conversed in inns, explored churches, nosed about furniture shops. Every name on a tombstone or war memorial suggested Devonian history to him ; with every inn-keeper he was immediately on terms, discoursing of the local families, asking what had become of some landmark of long ago, inquiring (also) about the crops and political events. In the private houses he did not rest until he had investigated every attic : in the churches he was for ever scrutinising painted screens and asking me to decipher heraldic coats on the paving stones. Passing through a village, he was always liable to call on me to stop suddenly : “ I want to look into that baker’s shop. That is where William Tucker, the portrait painter, was born ; he was a pupil of Skinner, who was a friend of Joshua Reynolds ; I have a portrait by him of John Stone, the headmaster of the Buckfastleigh Grammar School, that I intend to give to the Exeter Art Gallery.” In he would go for ten minutes, and return full of news that had been given him about modern Tuckers, in British Columbia, about Tucker portraits still in the vicinity, and about the connections of the existing baker.

So retentive a memory I have never known.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

I was always content, when with him, to listen to him; and I never knew him repeat himself. About English portrait painting in particular he knew a prodigious amount. He united in singular degree a power of distinguishing good from bad painting with a predominant interest in the character and fortunes of painter and sitter. He had little use for landscape painters, and as little for foreign painters. English portrait painting, English people, English country life, the English past, were his lifelong interests; and his eye for character had stored his mind with thousands of odd little stories about everybody he had met, from the greatest Victorians to the smallest moderns. He might have written a most engaging, voluminous, and peculiar volume of reminiscences. He was often urged to dictate his materials, for he spoke a book a day; he said he would do so, but I doubt if he did. Possibly to him it may have seemed that a man of such apparent vitality and health of body and mind had plenty of time in front of him, I also thought that; we had promised ourselves for this year another week of hunting in corners that we had missed. We shall not have it now.

February 8, 1925.

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SUNDAY MORNINGS

page of his prose is very like every other page ; there is the same earnestly reasoning tone, the same augmentative repetitiveness of terms, the same coolness, the same even movement like the steady pace of a long-distance runner. His prose holds few surprises ; it is all of a piece, soothing, free from gross faults, held down by the nature of its content and the intention of its writer. At its worst it became a little choppy as well as monotonous. I may quote a characteristic example from *Studies in Christianity* :—

And that is the excuse which all men, not Germans alone, make for the cruelties which they do from a sense of duty. Never will they believe about others what they believe about themselves, never will they make the affirmation that in all men there are the same values. But that is the affirmation which Christianity makes, more consciously and clearly than any other religion. And it tells us that we shall be aware of our common values if we act on them. It is the refusal to act on them that makes us doubt them, first in others and then in ourselves. For man is of such a nature that he cannot keep a belief unless he acts on it ; to act contrary to his beliefs is to destroy them. Hence all the errors that infest our minds. . . .

On page after page the same terms are iterated, and most of the sentences begin with " And " and " But." Here was preaching, avowed as well as effective. It was his characteristic that he usually preached. This meant that his readers could not get away from the major things when

A. CLUTTON BROCK

they wished to, and that on occasion Clutton Brock was carried to undue lengths. His intellectual objection to what he regarded as romantic falsity led him to describe Keat's *Odes* as "student work," and he apparently preferred the verses written to Fanny Brawne. He showed often a naturally exquisite response to the sensual elements in art, but at times he was saying "Get thee behind me, Satan," to this response.

In his daily work as a reviewer of paintings he tempered his conscientiousness with generosity to the young, keeping an open mind, praising where he could, and conveying condemnation in the kindest possible way. He was always at the service of any movement which aimed at raising the standard of the public arts. It was part of his endeavour to be a good Christian and a good citizen. In his *Thoughts on the War*, which had a wide influence, he was conspicuously both. There may, by some accident, be a reader of these lines who is unacquainted with Clutton Brock's books. If so, I would recommend him to procure, as a start, *The Ultimate Belief* and *William Morris*. The last is a study of a character very sympathetic to Clutton Brock, and is one of the best short literary biographies in the language.

January 13, 1924.

